

NICOLAY, JOHN

DRAWER 10B

SECRETARIAT

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Abraham Lincoln's Secretaries

John Nicolay

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Nicolay's Editorial Was First Suggestion of Lincoln for President

(From Pike County Journal, Feb. 9, 1860)

FOR PRESIDENT, HON. ABRAHAM LINCOLN Subject to the Decision of the National Republican Convention.

We are very confident that we express the almost unanimous sentiment of the Republicans of Pike county in the announcement we make at the head of this article—a sentiment founded not only on the personal attachment to and admiration of Mr. Lincoln, but prompted also by a careful estimate of his qualifications both as to his fitness and availability to be chosen as the candidate in the coming campaign. It is conceded that the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana and Illinois will be the decisive battle-ground in the approaching contest, and of them Pennsylvania and Illinois are most hopeful of Republican success. While that Mr. Lincoln would be as acceptable to the Republican voters of Pennsylvania as any man whose name has yet been mentioned, we know he is beyond comparison the strongest man for the state of Illinois. We do not state this as mere speculation—the fact is acceptable of demonstration by figures. Give us Lincoln as the candidate and we can promise the electoral vote of Illinois for the Republicans, as a sure result. It is due to the growing interest and power of the west that the next Republican convention shall give her a candidate on the presidential ticket, and to no man in the west does the honor more pre-eminently belong than to Lincoln. From the introduction of the Nebraska bill to the present time, he has fought the extension of slavery as the champion chosen and pitted against the great apostle of popular sovereignty and has wrested triumph after triumph from the Little Giant for republicanism in the west.

We shall have yet one more battle with the delusion man's weapons can we arm ourselves as securely or of Douglasism in the state of Illinois, and with no fight as successfully as with the arguments offensive and defensive which Abe Lincoln has furnished us. Whatever may be the choice of the politicians, the people of Illinois are undoubtedly for Lincoln. They know him honest and capable, a man of simple habits and plain manners, but possessing a true heart and one of the noblest intellects in the land. He maintains the faith of the fathers of the Republic, he believes in the Declaration of Independence, he yields obedience to the constitution and the laws of his country. He has the radicalism of Jefferson and of Clay and the conservation of Washington and Jackson. In his hands the union would be safe.

Historical
C. F. D. Alden

The New York Mail.

Published Daily at 2 and 4 o'clock.
34 PARK ROW cor. Beekman St.

TERMS, INCLUDING POSTAGE.

One Year.....	\$6 00
Six Months	3 00
Three Months	1 50
One Month.....	50

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, FEB. 26, 1878.

A LIE WITH CIRCUMSTANCE.

A paragraph has been floating about among our exchanges which, as printed in the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, takes on this form:

The *Encyclopædia Britannica*, under the head of "Almqvist, the celebrated and eccentric Swedish author, born at Stockholm in 1793," tells this astonishing story:

Suddenly all minor criticism was silenced by the astounding news that Almqvist, convicted of forgery, and charged with murder, had fled from Sweden. This occurred in 1851. For many years no more was heard of him; but it was known that he went over to America, and, under a feigned name, succeeded in being appointed secretary to Abraham Lincoln. After Lincoln's death, Almqvist again fell under the ban of the law. His MSS., including several unprinted novels, were confiscated and destroyed, but he himself escaped to Europe, where, under another alias, he continued to exist a short time longer. His strange and sinister existence came to a close at Bremen, in 1866. It is by his romances, undoubtedly the best in Swedish, that his literary fame will mainly be supported; but his singular history will always point him out as a remarkable figure, even when his works are no longer read. He was another Eugene Aram, but of greater genius, and so far more successful that he escaped the judicial penalty of his crime.

The interesting question is, did Lincoln ever have a Secretary answering to the description given above, and if he did, what was the Secretary's name? Here is a chance to add an interesting chapter to a romantic life-history, or to prove that on rare occasions even the *Encyclopædia Britannica* can depart from the exact line of sober fact.

There is enough of seeming authority and particularity about this paragraph to make it mischievously sensational. But, since it actually does appear, as stated, in so prominent a work as the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and therefore has the endorsement of a respectable standard publication, the matter is lifted above the plane of a mere idle tale and is entitled to the trouble of corroboration or contradiction. It happens to be in our power to do the contradicting, and it is to be hoped that the denial will be so promptly sent on the track of the falsehood as to overtake and overwhelm it.

Mr. John G. Nicolay, the Clerk of the United States Supreme Court, who was Mr. Lincoln's private secretary from the time of the latter's nomination until just before the assassination of the President, may be presumed to know as much as any living person on the subject in question. In reply to a letter of inquiry touching the possibility of any truth in this Almqvist story, or of there being any foundation for it, Mr. Nicolay has written the following letter to a gentleman of this city:

WASHINGTON, Feb. 24, 1878.

MY DEAR SIR—I thank you for yours of the 23d inst. enclosing a newspaper slip cut from the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* of the 20th, calling public attention to the fact that the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, under the head of "Almqvist, the Celebrated and Eccentric Swedish Author, born at Stockholm in 1793," tells this astonishing story:

Suddenly all minor criticism was silenced by the astounding news that Almqvist, convicted of forgery and charged with murder, had fled from Sweden. This occurred in 1851. For many years no more was heard of him; but it is now known that he went to America, and under a feigned name succeeded in being appointed secretary to Abraham Lincoln. After Lincoln's death, Almqvist again fell under the ban of the law, etc.

I have examined the *Encyclopædia Britannica* in the Library of Congress here, and find the statement printed therein as alleged. I cannot imagine how the editors of that standard work could have been imposed upon by such a story. President Lincoln never had such a secretary, and no person ever stood in any relation to him who, by the wildest stretch of imagination, could be held to answer such a description. Upon inspection you will see that the allegation substantially confutes itself. "Almqvist" is said to have been born in 1793, and was therefore, when Mr. Lincoln became President, already burdened with sixty-eight years. The assertion that Mr. Lincoln employed an alien, a fugitive, a criminal and almost a septuagenarian as a secretary, in war times, is not only utterly untrue, but, in the light of the President's characteristics, and of American custom and habits, palpably absurd.

Yours truly, Jno. G. NICOLAY.

Nothing need be added to Mr. Nicolay's conclusive testimony to the falsity and absurdity of the Almqvist story. Now it remains for the editors and publishers of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* to explain the matter from their standpoint, or stand confessed as calumniators of President Lincoln and the American people. But, whatever course to them may seem the honest one to be pursued, it is clear enough that truth has been sacrificed to sensationalism by a reputable cyclopædia and history perverted for some malicious purpose. But the American Press can overtake and run down the lie by giving currency to Mr. Nicolay's admirable letter.

LINCOLN'S EARLY LIFE.

COL. JOHN G. NICOLAY GIVES A LETTER WRITER SOME POINTS.

How "Uncle Abe" Bore Himself During the Great Campaign of 1860—His Public Receptions at the White House in War Times.

Young Nicolay at 14 was thrown on his own strength and skill for a living. He served a year in a country store at \$4 a month, then secured the position of diabolical adjunct in a printing office. He went first to the broom, then to the roller, then to the case, then to the desk, and beginning as "devil," became editor and proprietor. Afterward, while reading law, he became a clerk in the office of the secretary of state of Illinois, and there, in 1857, among the politicians and story tellers gathered around the roaring log fire, he first made the acquaintance of Abraham Lincoln. There, too, without a suspicion of Lincoln's coming fame, he began that very year to make scrap books containing an authentic record of the growth of events of which the tall, gaunt, popular lawyer was soon to be the central figure. Col. Nicolay took from a shelf and showed me some of these thirty year old scrap books, which he now finds indispensable. "Hay and I made collections for scrap books, also," said he, "all the time that we were in the White House," and he produced one of these marked upon the back "Vol. XXXVIII."

"The first time I saw Mr. Lincoln," said Mr. Nicolay, "was in Pittsfield, Ill., where I was editing a paper in 1856. There was to be a campaign rally there, and Lincoln and Trumbull met on the sidewalk and embraced each other warmly. 'Why, Trumbull, you here?' said Lincoln. 'Why, Lincoln, you here?' responded the senator, for the fact that they were to speak for Fremont that night together was unknown to both. Afterward, around the stove in the office of the secretary of state, where I was a clerk for four years, Lincoln was a familiar presence and always the center of the group."

"How came you to be the president's secretary?" I asked.

"I was at the Chicago convention," said Col. Nicolay, "and when Lincoln was nominated I was ambitious to write his campaign biography. I was greatly disappointed when I failed to get the job and it was given to a young fellow from Ohio, one W. D. Howells, whom I had never before heard of. We have all heard of him since. I was regretting my bad luck a day or two after to Mr. Butler, a close friend of Lincoln's, when he interrupted me with, 'Hush, that's of no consequence. You are to be private secretary.' That's the way it came about."

"How did Mr. Lincoln bear himself during the campaign?"

"He was always a self-poised man, quiet and equable in temper, seldom greatly elated or much depressed. He was not worried about the campaign, and had himself thoroughly in hand. People sent him many curious symbols of frontier life—axes, mauls, wedges, rails—and all sorts of people, on all sorts of errands, called on him in the governor's room in the state house, which was assigned to him. Many came from mere curiosity, and they would sit awkwardly around looking at him. He could not talk politics much at such a time, and the bulk of his visitors were shy of speech. They handled the symbols that had been sent in, and spoke to him of their use, and he would sometimes take the end of an ax

helve between his fingers and hold the ax out at arm's length to show that he had not lost his strength." In various simple ways he thus managed to kill time. One fellow had the impudence to come wearing a secession cockade on his hat. Lincoln spoke to him pleasantly and shook hands as with the others, and the intruder sat around half an hour, looking foolish and saying nothing, and finally went out. The crowd quietly ignored the intended insult."

"Mr. Lincoln was just as democratic in the White House, I believe," I said.

"Yes," assented Col. Nicolay, "and that went far toward giving him his firm hold on the hearts of the people. It was his custom, while he was president, to hold an informal reception between 12 and 1 o'clock each day, to hear in person the requests and wishes of all sorts of people who chose to come to see him. Rich and poor, white and black, crowded into his business office (now Col. Lamont's), shook hands and told him what they wanted. He generally wrote a card and referred the petitioner to the proper department, but often he attended to it himself. Men who wanted office came; alleged Unionists who wanted pay for losses; cranks who showed him how to put down the rebellion; mothers who had sons in the army; relatives of men who had been ordered shot; tramps who were hard up and wanted money or transportation to enable them to go somewhere. It was like some ancient Druid standing under an oak tree and dealing out justice to the realm."

I asked if Mr. Lincoln comprehended that he was in constant danger of his life.

"Of course," said Col. Nicolay. "It was often discussed between his friends and himself. They would say, 'Now, Lincoln, you must look out and be constantly on your guard. Some crank is liable to come along and kill you.' His answer always was, 'I will be careful. But I cannot discharge my duties and withdraw myself entirely from danger of an assault. I see hundreds of strangers every day, and if anybody has the disposition to kill me he will find opportunity. To be absolutely safe I should lock myself up in a box.' Threatening letters came, and these I always showed to Mr. Lincoln, who generally turned them over to the war department."—Washington Cor. Chicago Herald.

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
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FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

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SECRETARY NICOLAY'S LIBRARY

John D. Nicolay became associated with Lincoln immediately after the Republican nominee was named at Chicago and upon Lincoln's election Nicolay became the President's private secretary. This close contact would make the activities of Nicolay between May, 1860, and April, 1865, of vital importance to every student of Abraham Lincoln. The fact that Nicolay's office was in the Executive Mansion allows us to assume that his personal library was housed there. It is not too much to conclude that the President had access to the book shelves. In fact many of the volumes it contained were once in his possession.

The Anderson Auction Company, at New York City, on Friday, January 6, 1905, sold at a public sale "A Rich Collection of Books and Pamphlets mainly of the Civil War Period being a portion of the Private Library of the late Col. John G. Nicolay." There were 367 lots of books and pamphlets listed which contained about 1500 items. Many of the books were sold in lots of from 20 to 40 volumes with but two or three titles mentioned. It is fortunate that a catalogue with the prices which the items brought has been preserved.

Possibly the most interesting section of the catalogue lists the books that were inscribed to Abraham Lincoln and later came into the possession of his secretary. Those which we are reasonably certain belonged to the President are listed as they appear in the catalogue.

Presentation Copies to Lincoln

"Fifteenth Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color in the U. S. Has written on title 'Hon. A. Lincoln.' Washington 1832."

"The Republican Party: its Origin, Necessity and Permanence. Speech of Charles Sumner. Presented by author. New York 1860."

"Proceedings of the N. Y. Electoral College at Albany. Dec. 4, 1860. Presentation copy to Lincoln. Albany 1860."

"Maj. Gen. Geo. B. McClellan 1861-1862. Presentation copy to Abraham Lincoln. New York 1862."

"Poems, by Henry Peterson. Presentation copy to Abraham Lincoln. Philadelphia 1863."

"Speeches delivered in England during the Civil War. By George Francis Train. Presentation copy from the publisher to President Lincoln. Philadelphia 1862."

"Hartley's Map of Arizona. Presentation copy to the President of the United States."

Possibly four other books listed were also in possession of Mr. Lincoln as we have evidence of his having received presentation copies from the authors or publishers of: *Among the Pines* by Kirke (Gilmore); *Dictionary of Congress* by Lanman; *The Pioneer Boy* by Thayer; and *War Powers of the President* by Whiting.

Other Books Originally Lincoln's

Other books about Lincoln, aside from the presentation copies listed, which it is reasonably sure he read appear in the catalogue. Those noted are *Political Textbook for 1860*; *Bartlett's Life of Lincoln*, 1860; *Carpenter's Cause of the War*; Thayer, *Character and Public Life*, 1864.

Two of Lincoln's own productions are among the items sold. The debates with Douglas and the *Speech of Hon. Abraham Lincoln delivered at Springfield July 17, 1858*. There were twenty copies of the latter and together with a pamphlet entitled: *Louisiana's Tribute to Lincoln* brought the sum of \$19.00, twice as much as any other lot sold, but little more than one copy of Lincoln's speech would bring today.

Items Probably Used by Lincoln

There were many miscellaneous items sold which invite speculation as to contents especially seven lots under the caption, "Civil War Maps, etc." containing about 100 pieces and referring to such places as Gettysburg; Shilo; Forts Sumpter and Wagner; Logan's Cross Roads; Hampton Roads; Harpers Ferry; Chattanooga; Perryville, Ky.; Region below Gettysburg and Appomattox Court House; Atlanta; Petersburg and Five Forks; Antietam; Fredericksburg; Jetersville; Sailor's Creek and 25 miles around Richmond. The maps brought from 2 to 5 cents apiece. A Map of the Seat of War near Fortress Monroe showing the defenses and an original pen and ink drawing brought 15 cents. It is safe to conclude that many of these were the war maps used by the President.

The Congressional Globe and Congressional Record, "1858, onwards. Together 109 volumes." are mentioned. A file of the New York Tribune for May 1859 to June 1864 inclusive (21 volumes) sold for 85 cents a volume.

Space is available for a very few of the titles in the general library sold at the Nicolay sale. Selections have been made of books Lincoln probably looked over, at least they were published during the years Nicolay was associated with him and they are arranged in chronological groups according to publication dates. Names of authors and titles are abbreviated.

1860

Redpath, Echoes of Harpers Ferry; (Scott), The Last Principle of Sectional Equilibrium; Sherman, Slavery in the U. S.; Stephen A. Douglas.

1861

Address on the Death of Stephen A. Douglas; Van Ervie, Negroes; White, National Hymns.

1862

Brown, Rufus Choate; Brownlow, Parson Brownlow's Book; Cairnes, The Slave Power; (Conway), The Golden Hour, also The Rejected Stone; Cook, The Siege of Richmond; Crafts, Southern Rebellion; Harris, Prison Life; Livermore, Opinions on Negroes as Slaves, Citizens, and Soldiers; McMahon, Cause and Contrast; Newell, Orpheus C. Kerr Papers; Olmstead, The Cotton Kingdom; Putman, Tragedy of Errors; Reynolds, The Barons of the South.

1863

Beecher, Freedom and War; Cochin, The Results of Emancipation; Estvan, War Pictures from the South; Geer, Beyond the Lines; Hunnecutt, The Conspiracy Unveiled; Mahoney, The Prisoner of State; Noyes, The Bivouac and the Battlefield; Phillips, Speeches, Lectures, etc.; Sumpter Anniversary; Walker, Jefferson Davis' Repudiation.

1864

Abbott, The History of the Civil War; Boker, Poems of the War; Gilmore, Dawn in Tennessee; de Coin, Tobacco and Cotton; Hosmer, The Color General; Jacobs, Rebel Invasion of Maryland; Owen, The Wrong of Slavery; Moore, Rebel Rhymes and Rhapsodies, also Lyrics of Loyalty; Piatt, Nests at Washington; Ridden, Idyls of Battle; Red Tape and Pigeon Hole Generals.

Books About Lincoln Nicolay Acquired

After Lincoln's death Nicolay picked up biographies of his chief by Crosby, Gray, Herndon, Holland and Raymond and several books relating to the assassination and trial of the assassins. Although there were many books sold bearing imprints later than Lincoln's death, the larger number as the auction house announced were "mainly of the Civil War Period."

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
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Number 1061

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

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THE EXECUTIVE MANSION SECRETARIAT

The casual student of Abraham Lincoln usually associates John G. Nicolay and John Hay as occupying positions of equal importance in the Executive Mansion Secretariat. The daughter of Nicolay however in a recent book in commenting on Lincoln's private secretary states, "Legally and officially my father was the only one. John Hay was his assistant." Elaborating still further on the professional service of Nicolay and Hay, Miss Nicolay notes, "My father appears to have been entirely responsible for John Hay's presence in Washington." It was Nicolay who requested the President Elect at Springfield to allow Hay to go with them to the nation's capitol as an assistant. Hay was given a clerkship in the Department of the Interior and assigned to duty at the White House.

Although Miss Nicolay does present her father as the one private secretary officially so called, she does admit there were others who were recognized in this capacity. She uses the plural form in the caption of one of her chapters entitled "The Private Secretaries" and states that a number of families have made the claim "quite innocently" that one of their relatives was "Private Secretary to Mr. Lincoln."

The other person most often associated with Nicolay and Hay as a member of the Executive Mansion Secretariat was William O. Stoddard. Mr. Lincoln's attention had been called to Stoddard by an editorial he had written for the *Central Illinois Gazette* in 1859, suggesting Lincoln for the Presidency. He was invited to take a clerkship at Washington where he was also assigned to the Department of the Interior and authorized to sign Land Warrants. Eventually his desk was moved to the White House where he was given other duties. One of his tasks was to take care of Mrs. Lincoln's correspondence which suggests he might be referred to as her private secretary as well as Mr. Lincoln's. Stoddard in his book entitled *Inside the White House in War Times* is cited on the title page as "One of the President's Private Secretaries."

Aside from these three better known secretarial assistants who were with Lincoln for the first four years of his incumbency as President it is known that upon Stoddard's retirement, because of an extended illness, Mr. Nicolay invited Edward Duffield Neill to fill the vacancy. Undoubtedly his status was the same as Stoddard's.

Secretary Neill was a Presbyterian clergyman who graduated from Amherst and Andover. Moving to St. Paul he served as chancellor of the University of Minnesota, became an authority on Minnesota history, and the author of several historical books. A biographical sketch of him states; "He was associated with Nicolay and Hay as one of the Private Secretaries of President Abraham Lincoln and assisted in handling the President's mail."

Neill prepared a manuscript entitled "President Lincoln's Mail Bag" which was supposed to have been deposited with the Minnesota Historical Society, but correspondence in 1941 failed to locate this valuable essay. Such papers as he left however, are deposited with the Society. Mr. Neill stated that the last bag of mail for President Lincoln arriving after his death was "opened amid awful stillness and two of the last letters read

were from General Burnside and Chief Justice Chase." The Burnside letter contained his resignation and Chase's memorandum referred to "voting privileges of the negro."

It may be of some significance to note that Hay and Stoddard, both legally under the supervision of the Interior Department, had desks in the same room while Nicolay had a private office. Upon Stoddard's retirement we assume that Neill took over Stoddard's desk.

According to Miss Nicolay, Charles H. Philbrick, an Illinois friend of Nicolay, was made a second class clerk in the Department of the Interior whose duties were associated with the White House. The indexes of the *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society* for a period of forty years, however, do not reveal any mention of his name, so it is likely he did not claim to be a private secretary of the President.

A news item appearing in the *New York Times* for January 9, 1949, indicates that a man by the name of Gustave H. Matile wrote from the Executive Mansion in 1864 as a secretary of Lincoln. The letters were directed to S. N. Holmes, one in reply to a request for the President's autograph. No further information is available about the actual status of this secretary.

A recent acquisition by the Foundation in the form of an envelope addressed to John F. Marvel, Fall River, Mass. carries two lines printed in script as follows:

From the President of the United States
(blank space for name)

Private Secretary

The post mark on this envelope is dated "Washington, D. C. August 22" but the year is blurred so that it is difficult to determine whether it is "62" or "64." In the blank space left for a name to be inserted is a beautifully inscribed signature, W. A. Browning. Apparently he felt qualified to sign as a Private Secretary of Mr. Lincoln.

Another envelope in possession of the Foundation carries in old English type the line:

From the President of the United States
(space for signature)

Priv. Sec.

In this instance the name inserted in the blank space is John Hay.

These envelope forms with the blank space left for signatures indicate that it was anticipated that they would be used by various people, or more than one at least. Otherwise the name of John G. Nicolay would have been printed in. Possibly the signature served the purpose of a franking notice and was so construed. In two instances where John Hay uses this type of envelope it appears as if he had crossed out the title "Priv. Sec."

In Stoddard's reminiscence of White House Days there is this tribute to the President:

"I do not know or believe that he ever found fault with one of his private secretaries in all the onerous and delicate duties with which they were charged."

The roster of the Executive Mansion Secretariat as revealed by the evidence presented would contain the names of John G. Nicolay, John Hay, William O. Stoddard, Edward Duffield Neill, Charles H. Philbrick, Gustave H. Matile, and W. A. Browning.

Lincoln's Secretary Appreciated His Boss



MISS HELEN NICOLAY (left) is the daughter of John G. Nicolay, secretary to Abraham Lincoln. The drawing is by Joseph Parrish of The Chicago Tribune.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 7. (AP) — Abraham Lincoln's private secretary considered the Civil War president's place in history so important he even declined to tell any anecdotes about the great man to his little daughter.

In disclosing this, Miss Helen Nicolay said that her father, John G. Nicolay, had a strong feeling that Lincoln's accomplishments were so great and his position in the nation's history so outstanding that "personal details should be passed by."

Nicolay was Lincoln's secretary from 1860 to 1865 and later collaborated with another secretary, John Hay, in a comprehensive Lincoln biography. Helen Nicolay, an author who lives here, was born in France the year after Lincoln's assassination. Her father was serving then as American consul at Paris.

Despite her father's reluctance to discuss Lincoln's personal life the sprightly white-haired woman has three reminders of the Great Emancipator.

These are an enduring friendship with the President's eldest son, the late Robert Todd Lincoln, a picture of the President made about the time of his Gettysburg Address and a huge black walnut desk her

father used in the White House. The desk is a principal treasure of her book-lined study.

"Lincoln had to go through the office where the desk was to get to his part of the White House," she said. "It's highly probable—anyway I like to think that it is—that Lincoln used to stop and lean up against the desk or sit on the corner of it and talk to my father."

Miss Nicolay considers Robert Todd Lincoln, who died in 1926, a truly great man in his own right. Unfortunately for his own place in history, she says, he was overshadowed by his father. She recalls that he was secretary of war in the cabinets of Presidents Garfield and Arthur, minister to Great Britain and a very successful businessman.

Many of Miss Nicolay's 20 published books have been slanted for the juvenile trade, dealing with the lives of Lincoln, Washington, Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, and other national heroes. Her latest volume, published three years ago, was a biography of her father, entitled "Lincoln's Secretary."

With a background reaching back to the first Republican President, what did she think of the outcome of the most recent election?

"I was very pleased with Ike's election," she said.

Mark Centennial of Nicolay Editorial Suggesting Lincoln for Presidency



AUTHOR OF EDITORIAL—Young John G. Nicolay, photographed in Washington, D. C. three months after he arrived at the White House to be Lincoln's private secretary. This was July, 1861. A year earlier, visiting an editor friend in Pittsfield, Nicolay had written the editorial (see reprint) urging Abraham Lincoln as a presidential candidate.

Tuesday, Feb. 9, is an important date in the history of Pike county and Pittsfield! Why?

One hundred years ago yesterday, a young man in his early twenties was visiting in Pittsfield. He had for several years been the editor of the "Free Press" and had spent his youth in Pike county. But now he was living in the state capital and working in the office of another Pike Countian, Secretary of State Hatch, of Griggsville. He did, however, have a sweetheart here in Pittsfield and no doubt in addition to visiting his old friends on the square he was also attracted here to call on her. Yes, this young man was John Nicolay, who in later years became private secretary to President Lincoln.

In his rambles from one business place to another he, of course, could not resist the temptation to visit his old newspaper and to talk shop with the then editor, Dan Bush. Bush had renamed the old Free Press the Pike County Journal, and on this grey February day with the chill of winter hanging in the courtyard trees we find this sparse young man of twenty odd years entering the door of the Pike County Journal.

No doubt the front office was warm with friendship and hospitality as well as the heat of the pot bellied stove, and as Editor Bush turned from his pigeon holed desk it must have been a warm word of welcome he gave the home town boy. Beyond the confines of the office Nicolay no doubt surveyed the cases of type and in the rear the crude hand presses with which he was so familiar.

As the editor and former editor visited there, the talk, as in these days, drifted to national affairs. Our nation was truly in a time of trial and men were discussing the pros and cons of the problems of the day.

While editor of the Free Press young Nicolay had met a lanky lawyer who had conducted business in Pike county on numerous occasions. Nicolay had taken a liking to this sometimes odd man who certainly did not look like a statesman but yet sounded like one. Nicolay was impressed with the ideas and the simple presentation of ideals that were expressed by this transient lawyer from the Sangamon county to the east.

Nicolay could see greatness with justice, love with humility and a combination of level-headed goodness in his friend, who had served his country in the state legislature at Vandalia and in the national congress. Nicolay, in his enthusiasm for his friend from New Salem hill, waxed eloquent and Editor Bush knew that he was hearing a masterpiece of cracker box oratory. Bush grabbed a pencil and thrust it in the hand of the young reporter requesting him to put his words on paper.

Thus we have the now-famous first editorial projecting Abraham Lincoln of Illinois into the national scene.

All this by a Pike county man in Pike county — 100 years ago this week. Truly a centennial of greatness in the story of America.

EXHIBIT DESK OF LINCOLN'S SECRETARY

A desk that belonged to Abraham Lincoln's personal secretary was placed on exhibit yesterday in the Chicago Historical society as the February feature of the month.

The 15 drawer desk with built-in safe and letter box was given to John G. Nicolai, the secretary, after he left the White House in 1865. Later it was sold in an auction of used furniture in Washington, D. C.

Nicolai sold his Pittsfield [Pike county] newspaper in 1856 to move to Springfield, where he worked for the secretary of state. He met Lincoln and shortly thereafter became his private secretary.

LINCOLN'S FRIEND

Death of John G. Nicolay, His Private
Secretary and Biographer.

SKETCH OF HIS NOTABLE CAREER

Man of High Accomplishments and
Sturdy Character.

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Mr. John G. Nicolay, private secretary to President Lincoln, and, in collaboration with John Hay, present Secretary of State, the author of the biography of that great man, died late yesterday afternoon, after a lingering illness, at his residence, No. 212 B street southeast. He was in his seventieth year. Mr. Nicolay had been in feeble health for several years, and since 1837, when he resigned his position as marshal of the United States Supreme Court, has been leading a retired life. He spent last winter in Europe, returning in the spring, with his health much impaired. Since May he was confined to his bed and for some time his case had been regarded as hopeless by his family physician, Dr. J. W. Bayne, and Dr. W. W. Johnston, who was lately called in consultation. Death was due to general debility. Mr. Nicolay is survived by a daughter, Miss Helen Nicolay, who has attained recognition as an artist of much merit, but who in the recent past has devoted herself entirely to ministering to her father.

Mr. Nicolay was a Bavarian, having been born at Essingen February 26, 1832. He was the son of John and Helena Nicolay. The family emigrated to America in 1838, and first made its home in Cincinnati. Later the Nicolays removed to Indiana, Missouri and Illinois, successively. When the boy was fourteen years old his parents died and he was thrown upon his own resources. He had received an elementary education, and after serving as a clerk in a small store in St. Louis for a short time he went to Pittsfield, Pike county, Ill., and started to learn the printer's trade in the office of the Free Press, a weekly county paper. His advancement was rapid. After mastering the art preservative he became successively publisher, editor and proprietor of the journal. The vigorous characteristics which he displayed in this field attracted general attention to him and he rapidly became a political power in Illinois.

He relinquished his paper to take a position in the office of Charles Hatch, then secretary of state of Illinois, at the state capital, Springfield.

His Meeting With Lincoln.

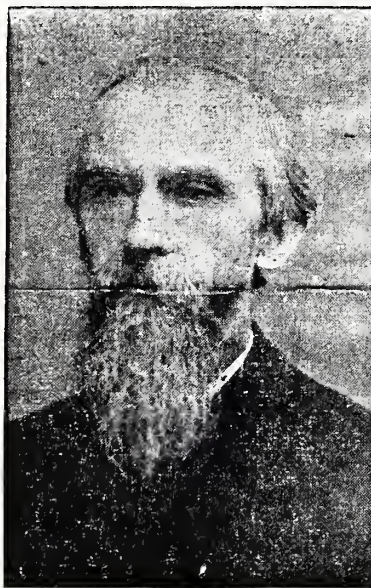
Here he met Abraham Lincoln and formed the acquaintance that was to ripen into the most intimate of friendships. During the presidential campaign of 1860 Mr. Lincoln made Mr. Nicolay his private secretary, and he was a potent factor in that memorable contest. He was constantly with Mr. Lincoln from the time of the latter's nomination until his inauguration, and during the perilous period that followed he enjoyed the same intimate and responsible relations with the President. It was at Mr. Nicolay's suggestion that John Hay became a member of Lincoln's official family, as executive clerk, and the friendship between the two was warm and intimate to the last.

Made Consul at Paris.

Upon the beginning of President Lincoln's second term he appointed Mr. Nicolay United States consul at Paris and Mr. Hay secretary of the American legation at the same capital. Mr. Nicolay was in Charleston, S. C., returning from a vacation trip to Cuba, when he was informed of President Lincoln's assassination. A celebration had been planned in honor of the raising of the American flag over Fort Sumter, four years before, by Maj. Anderson, and Mr. Nicolay had been invited to be the latter's guest. He hurried at once to Washington, however, reaching here barely in time to attend the obsequies.

Previous to sailing for his post in Paris in the fall of 1865 Mr. Nicolay wedded Miss Theresina Bates of Pittsfield, Ill. Two children were born to them, a son who died in infancy and the daughter who survives. Mrs. Nicolay died sixteen years ago.

Mr. Nicolay served as consul at Paris



four years, and when he returned went west again. He was living in comparative retirement in 1872 when he was tendered the position of marshal of the United States Supreme Court, which he filled for fifteen years, resigning, as stated, in 1887.

The History of Lincoln.

While in Paris Mr. Nicolay and Mr. Hay determined to write the biography of Abraham Lincoln, and they began then to gather and prepare the materials for their great work. The actual writing was commenced in 1874, and twelve years later, in November, 1886, "Abraham Lincoln; A History," began publication in the Century Magazine, and was continued until 1890. In the latter year the work, including many important chapters which did not appear serially, was published in ten volumes. Four years later Messrs. Nicolay and Hay issued a catalogued and edited "Abraham Lincoln's Complete Works."

Mr. Nicolay wrote the article on Presi-

dent Lincoln in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, and in 1881 published "The Outbreak of the Rebellion," being the first of a series of volumes entitled "Campaigns of the Civil War." He was a frequent contributor to magazines on other subjects, and until ill-health prevented pursued his literary labors.

Mr. Nicolay was a man of varied accomplishments, all of a high character. He was a recognized connoisseur in art matters and a warm patron of music. He was a linguist of much ability and had a poetic strain which found outlet in many graceful verses. He was one of the founders of the Literary Society and of the Columbia Historical Society of this city, and a life member of the American Historical Association.

Funeral services will be held at 3 o'clock tomorrow afternoon at the residence on B street, Rev. Tunis S. Hamlin, pastor of the Church of the Covenant, officiating. Interment will be made in Oak Hill cemetery.



Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation . . . Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Editor
Published each month by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 1547

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

January, 1967

Some Correspondence Between John Hay and Helen Nicolay about her father, the Sixteenth President, royalty payments, investments and the problems of authorship

Part 1

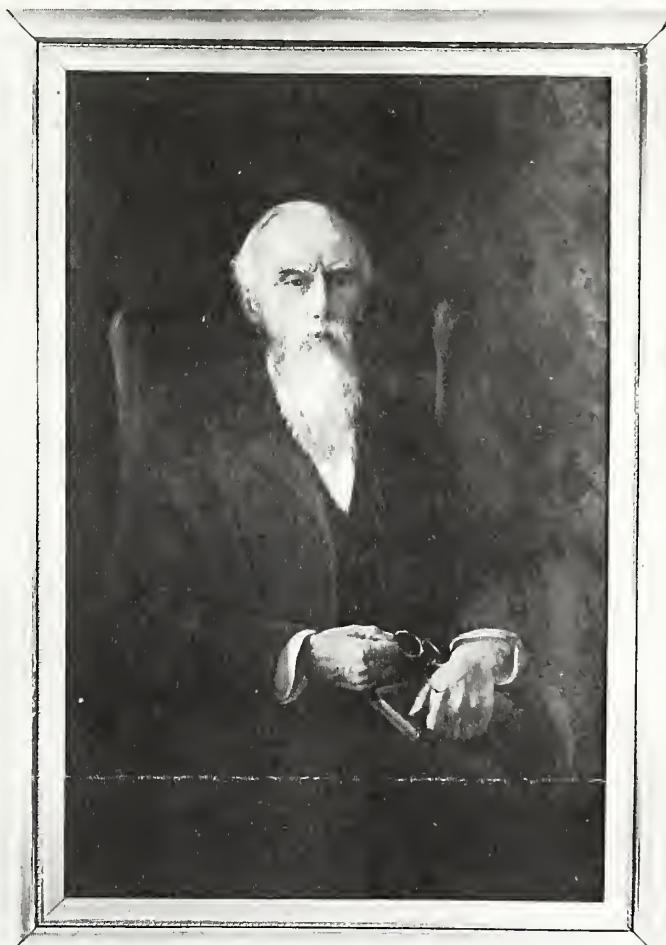
Editor's Note: All the original letters and documents used in this compilation are to be found in the Foundation collection. It is, perhaps, unusual to have so complete a file. This can be explained by the fact that Miss Helen Nicolay made a longhand copy of nearly every letter she wrote to John Hay, even to the affixing of her signature. Then, too, years later (Sept. 11th) she received the following letter from Alice Wadsworth, the daughter of John Hay: "Dear Helen Nicolay; years ago I came across these letters of yours and gathered them together intending to send them to you, but somehow or other they were pushed to the back of the desk drawer, and I forgot them. Sorry! Perhaps you have not yet come down from Holderness but I am sure these will reach you eventually, now they are really on their way." These letters were undoubtedly the originals that Miss Nicolay had sent to John Hay.

Most of John Hay's letters (up to the year 1904) were written on mourning stationery which served a double purpose as a memorial to President McKinley and to Hay's son, Adelbert. About half of the Hay letters are typewritten. None of Miss Nicolay's letters are typewritten. About half of them are written on mourning stationery as her father died in 1901.

While the information contained in these letters is not particularly earth-shaking, they do reveal little insights into the characters of the principals involved, and the literary abilities of the authors, particularly John Hay. Anyway, there is some unexplainable fascination in the reading of private correspondence, whether the writers are literate or not.

R. G. M.

John George Nicolay, private secretary to President Abraham Lincoln, and co-author with John Hay of several works on the life of the great War President, died on September 27, 1901 at the age of seventy years. He had for a long period suffered ill health, and since his resignation as Marshal of the United States Supreme Court in 1887 had been living quietly at 212 B Street, S.E., in Washington, D.C. with Helen, his only daughter. His wife, Therenia Bates, whom he had married on June 15, 1865, died in November, 1885, when Helen was nineteen years of age.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

**John George Nicolay
1832-1901**

Biographer, born in Essingen, Bavaria; came to the United States in 1838; private secretary to Abraham Lincoln (1860-65); U. S. Consul at Paris (1865-69); Marshal of U. S. Supreme Court (1872-87); collaborator with John Hay in a biography of Abraham Lincoln (1890), and in an edition of the complete works of Abraham Lincoln. This original portrait of Nicolay was painted by his daughter, Helen Nicolay.

During these last years of Nicolay's retirement, he and his daughter had been engaged in writing a one volume biography of Abraham Lincoln, which would be a condensation of Nicolay and Hay's monumental ten volume work, *Abraham Lincoln: A History*. In compiling the information for this volume Colonel John Hay, then Secretary of State (1898-1905), was most helpful, whenever he could find the time, in the promotion of the project.

From time to time Hay visited with the Nicolays, and he would occasionally send little notes by mail to amuse his old friend. One such item was a newspaper clipping taken from the *New York Herald*, dated June 20, 1901, concerning H. W. Gourley entitled "Abe! Lincoln's Protege Ends Forty Years In Custom House." According to the newspaper article President Lincoln appointed Gourley, who had once resided in Springfield, Illinois, to a minor clerkship at the New York Customs House. "I knew Abraham Lincoln," said Gourley, "as well as I knew my own father." This prompted Hay to write Helen Nicolay as follows:

Dear Helen:

If your father is amiable perhaps he may smile to see how Harry Gourley has fallen in with the tide which masters them all and has begun to fib about his intimacy with Old Abe.

J. H.

On September 22, 1901 from the Department of State, John Hay wrote to Helen Nicolay. At this time he must have realized that his old friend and collaborator could not live very much longer.

My Dear Helen

Form No. 106.

THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY.

INCORPORATED

21,000 OFFICES IN AMERICA. CABLE SERVICE TO ALL THE WORLD.

THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY, INCORPORATED, 100 WALL STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.
 THOS. T. ECKERT, President and General Manager.

RECEIVED at Wyal Building, Cor. 14th & F. Streets, Washington, D. C.

ALB 7:30 Am 19 D.H.

Newbury, New Hamp, Sept. 27, 1901

Miss Helen Nicolay

212 B St., S.E., Washington, D.C.

My wife joins me in loving sympathy. It is impossible for me to come on at this moment. Mr. Babcock will do everything I could have done. May God comfort you with the thought of your dear father's release from suffering and of his blameless life and fame.

John Hay.

2P

From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Telegram from John Hay to Helen Nicolay expressing sympathy in regard to the death of her father.

I was so occupied every instant of the time yesterday that I could not come to see you. We are going to Newbury to-day to be gone a week or two. I have asked Mr. Babcock, my Private Secretary, to call at your home from time to time and put himself at your disposition for anything I could do if I were here. You must have no hesitation in calling upon me, or upon Mr. Babcock in my place, precisely as if I were your father's brother. You must not regard it as a matter of favor or obligation, except that you are doing me a favor in allowing me to do whatever is in my power.

My wife sends her love, and I am always,

Sincerely Yours

John Hay

On September 24, 1901 just three days before her father died, Miss Nicolay answered Colonel Hay's cordial letter.

Dear Colonel Hay:

I am afraid I did not more than half thank you for your kind thoughtful note last Sunday. When Mr. Babcock brought it I was still dazed from a horrible experience of the night before, and I am sure I do not know what I wrote you.

Today the Doctor spoke very encouragingly to Papa, and told me afterwards, that though he did not know how much or how little it might mean there was no doubt of the fact that our patient was better. I want you and Mrs. Hay to share the ray of hope with me.

The very experience that at the time seemed so terrible encourages me. He had been, as you saw, very weak. Suddenly, without warning Saturday night, came a period of violent delirium, when it took the combined strength of three of us to keep him in bed and to administer the necessary medicines to quiet him. His grip was like steel and once when his fingers closed on my wrist it seemed as though they might break it before I could unclasp them. The collapse that followed was also very distressing but soon passed, and by morning he had rallied in a manner to astonish us all. The improvement has continued and I feel that if he has strength for a performance of that kind, he must have greater reserve than we gave him credit for.

Mr. Babcock was here again this morning, renewing the kind offers you made, and proffering his services in any form. Thank you so much. I think and trust I shall have no occasion to come to you for the material assistance you suggest. In case I do it will be easier to accept it from you than from anyone else in the wide world and I will accept it, in the spirit in which it is offered. At present however there is no need for even the thought of such a thing.

Please give my love to Mrs. Hay. It wrung my heart to see her looking so sad.

I fear too that I had been inconsiderate in asking you to come upstairs. I really thought Papa would be able to say a little more to you. I know he would want you to come. He realizes perfectly who you were, for he spoke of your visit, next day.

I hope when you come back that you will see him again, and find him much more like himself and in the meantime that air and glorious foliage of New England will rest and cheer both you and Mrs. Hay. One can-

not be altogether sad in that glory of crimson and gold
 With Much Love

Helen Nicolay

On September 27, 1901 Miss Nicolay sent Colonel John Hay at Newbury, New Hampshire, the following telegram:

My father died today do not think of coming to the funeral.

Upon receiving the distressing telegram, Colonel Hay wired Miss Nicolay, the same day, as follows:

My wife joins me in loving sympathy. It is impossible for me to come on at this moment. Mr. Babcock will do everything I could have done. May God comfort you with the thought of your dear father's release from suffering and of his blameless life and fame.

Two days after the death of her father, Miss Nicolay wrote Colonel Hay acknowledging receipt of his telegram:

Dear Colonel Hay

Thank you and Mrs. Hay for your telegram of sympathy. The thought that it contains is the one great comfort I have at this time.

I am afraid my telegram to you must have been changed in the sending — for I tried to so word it that you would see I did not expect and did not want you to think of coming to the funeral.

Mr. Gilder* happened to be in town, and was so tactful and comforting. I have always liked him, but never dreamed of the depth and sweetness of his nature. My relatives were all too far away to come, and you were out of town — there seemed no one nearer or better loved by Papa — so he rode to the cemetery with me. It was a hard thing I asked of him, and he really made my sorrow easier to bear. Before we came back he handed me a little poem he had written about my father, which I am sure you will like as much as I do.

My own pastor was out of town, and Dr. Hamlin** conducted the short and simple service. His little address was full of appreciation, and he has been extremely kind to me.***

I want to thank you for the beautiful flowers that came to us by your thoughtfulness. Some of them I placed beside my father — His friends of the Century Co., sent others that were very lovely — as did the President.****

I know that you will be as thankful as I that the end was peaceful — Papa simply ceased breathing. It was a surprise to us as all — neither the doctor nor the nurse expected it to come that day. At four o'clock I sent a note to the doctor and called the nurse who was resting — not because I was alarmed but because I felt that I wanted them both near. He died at half-past five. Half an hour before that he talked with us, and his eyes seemed brighter and his enunciation clearer than it had been for many days. I had feared there might be a long night of agony, and feel so thankful it happened as it did.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

This card and black ribbon were taken from the floral wreath which was sent by President Theodore Roosevelt to John G. Nicolay's funeral.

*Richard Watson Gilder (1844-1909) editor of *The Century* (1881-1909).

**Dr. Teunis S. Hamlin was the pastor of the Church of the Covenant.

***"It is an odd coincidence that on Thursday last, the day Lincoln's remains were bestowed in their final resting place (reconstructed tomb,) occurred the death of John G. Nicolay, the great war President's private secretary." *Baltimore American*, September 30, 1901

****Theodore Roosevelt succeeded to the Presidency on the death of McKinley on September 14, 1901.

People have been wonderfully kind. Miss Gallaudet has come on to be with me for a little time, and I hope soon to be somewhat rested.

With love to you and yours

Sunday, September 29th

Helen Nicolay

After sending the telegram, Colonel Hay then wrote the daughter of his old friend and associate:

Dear Helen:

I received your telegram at eleven o'clock today — too late to get to Boston before night, and therefore too late to arrive in Washington before Monday. We are so out of the way that it takes 48 hours notice to get to Washington, and on Sundays there are no trains running.

I at once wired Mr. Babcock to put himself and all I could do absolutely at your service.

I shall not try to comfort you by any conventional words. Your heart is too sore and sad to listen to any thing of that kind. But after a while you will take consolation in reflecting what an inheritance of pleasant memories is yours. You have never seen a man purer in heart and in life, of higher principles and nobler thoughts, than was your father.

What a year this has been for me. I think what I was last June and what I am now. My dear boy,* my President,** your father, and Clarence King*** who is dying in California — the four men nearest me on Earth — all gone.

I do not know where your father is to be buried or where you are going.**** Mrs. Hay would be glad if you would come here. We shall be here, we hope, for two weeks. And you would be as quiet as anywhere in the world.

In love and sorrow

Yours faithfully

John Hay

Again on October 2, 1901, Col. Hay wrote to Helen from Newburg, N.H.:

Here is a letter from General Doster, one of your father's old friends. I have answered it.

Your telegram arrived correctly, but I wanted to explain that in spite of your prohibition I should have come on to the funeral, if it had been possible to get there in time. If I had started the moment I received your telegram I could not, if I had made all connections, have reached you before Sunday.

I am glad to learn that the end was so peaceful. The pain he was suffering had been a heavy weight on my heart for these months past.

I need not repeat that I hope you will make some use of us. If you can think of anything now write to me. When we meet we can talk everything over. I feel honestly in your debt, and will be glad of a chance to acknowledge it.

My wife sends her love and I am as ever

Sincerely Yours

John Hay

The letter by W. E. Doster from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, dated September 29, 1901 and enclosed by John Hay follows:

My Dear Sir:

I regret to read this morning the death notice of your old friend, fellow Secretary and co-historian in the life of Mr. Lincoln, Mr. John Nicolay. No doubt, you feel his loss as much as any one. I knew him also very well, during the war, and regret that I never saw much of him afterwards.

*In June, 1901, Hay's elder son Adelbert, whom President McKinley had just appointed his Private Secretary, died instantly by a fall from a window.

**President William McKinley died on September 14, 1901. Hay wrote "... What a strange and tragic fate it has been of mine — to stand by the bier of three of my dearest friends, Lincoln, Garfield, and McKinley, three of the gentlest of men, all risen to the head of the State, and all done to death by assassins."

***Before the year 1901 ran out, death took Clarence King. Hay wrote "I have acquired the funeral habit." In 1882 a novel entitled *Democracy*, a strikingly clever satire on Washington society was published. Clarence King is still commonly regarded as its author.

****Funeral services were held at the Nicolay home 212 B Street N. E., on Thursday, September 28, 1901. Burial was at the Oak Hill Cemetery. The pall-bearers selected from among the old friends of Mr. Nicolay were Judge Martin F. Morris, Col. L. Edward Clark, Dr. William T. Harris, Francis P. Leupp, Dr. Edward M. Gallaudet, and Judge William M. Springer.

If he left a family, I would be obliged if you conveyed to them my sincere sympathy

Very Sincerely Yours

W. E. Doster

To Hon. John Hay
Washington, D.C.

On October 4, 1901 Miss Nicolay acknowledged the receipt of Colonel Hay's sympathetic letters:

Dear Colonel Hay:

Thank you for your two letters, the latter enclosing one from General Doster. Thank you too for answering that. I am struggling to acknowledge the many notes I have received, but the pile seems to grow larger instead of smaller. Most of them express such a sincere admiration for my father that I cannot bear to leave unanswered, even for a week.

I wrote to Mrs. Hay a day or two ago to thank her for the kind invitation you both sent me, and to explain that it seems best for me to stay here for the present. I am really very well, and a home-coming would be hard to bear. Besides, there are many things to do.

When you come back to town I shall have to ask you many questions. In the meantime your love and sympathy are a great help and comfort.

Mr. Babcock lies awake nights imagining things to do for me, and Dr. Gallaudet has been kindness itself. With love to Mrs. Hay and the girls

Very sincerely yours

Helen Nicolay

Quite a number of financial transactions were negotiated between Col. Hay and Miss Nicolay due to the receipt of royalty checks from the Century Company. Of course, Helen Nicolay was entitled to her father's share of these payments. On November 1, 1901 John Hay wrote as follows:

My Dear Helen:

I have your letter. You must not bother about that check. You are too conscientious. "I shall have to be firm with you," as the old fashioned schoolmistresses used to say.

Yours sincerely

John Hay

John Nicolay:
This man loved Lincoln; him did much love;
through the long storm, right there, by him alone,
He stood his shield and sword; when died
he went, sweet sorrowful soul; still high above
all other passions, that for his spirit's love!
To his one task his pure life was devoted —
he strove to make the world know Lincoln's mind;
he served him living, and he served him dead;
So shall the light from that immortal flame
keep bright forever his most faithful name.

Richard Watson Gilder

*Washington, D.C.
Oct. 28, 1901.*

From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

On September 29, 1901 Miss Nicolay wrote Colonel Hay, "Before we came back [from the cemetery] he [Richard Watson Gilder] handed me a little poem about my father, which I am sure you will like as much as I do." This original poem is now in the files of the Lincoln National Life Foundation. It was published on the editorial page of the *Evening Post* and several other newspapers, one of which was the *Springfield (Mass.) Republican*, October 1, 1901.

The very next day, (November 2, 1901), Colonel Hay again wrote to Miss Nicolay about royalty payments:

Dear Helen:

Here you have your little \$500. a year. May you live long to enjoy it.

Yours faithfully
John Hay

On November 2, 1901 Miss Nicolay wrote Colonel Hay about some Abraham Lincoln papers that had been in her father's custody. She also sent him two checks:

Dear Colonel Hay:

Here are two checks. Many thanks. Yesterday I received a letter from Mr. Lincoln saying he meant to come to Washington and see you before taking away the papers, but offering to have them cared for elsewhere immediately if they were in my way. Of course I wrote him that they were merely harmlessly decorative in my present position.

Very truly yours
Helen Nicolay

John Hay replied to Miss Nicolay with a letter dated November 4, 1901:

My Dear Helen:

I have the check you so kindly sent me.

I also have a letter from Mr. Lincoln accepting my proposition to place the papers now in the Safe Deposit Company in the State Department temporarily. Will you kindly send me an order on the Bank, so that I can have them transferred, and relieve you of that much responsibility.

Yours sincerely
John Hay

On the same date (November 4, 1901) that John Hay replied to Miss Nicolay, she wrote him a letter of acknowledgement and mentioned Robert Lincoln:

Dear Col. Hay

The green and valuable paper representing "\$500 a year" reached me last night. Thank you again for your kindness in the matter.

This morning I received the enclosed [perhaps an order on the bank] from Robert Lincoln.

Sincerely yours
Helen Nicolay

Helen Nicolay wrote Robert Lincoln again on May 22, 1902 relative to the Lincoln papers:

Dear Mr. Lincoln:

You remember that when I wrote to you last fall about President Lincoln's papers that had been in my father's custody, I mentioned besides the box sent at that time



From the Lloyd Ostendorf Collection

An 1884 photograph of John G. Nicolay in Mr. Champney's studio in Deerfield, Massachusetts. The identity of the four people (left to right) are: girl at extreme left, unknown, John G. Nicolay, Mrs. (Therena Bates) Nicolay and their daughter, Helen Nicolay. This photograph was made by James U. Stead, 383 6th Avenue, New York, N.Y.

THY WILL BE DONE

by John Hay.

Not in dumb resignation,
We lift our hands on high.
Not like the nerveless fatalist
Content to do or die.
Our faith springs like the eagle
Who soars to meet the sun,-
And cries exulting unto Thee
O Lord, Thy Will Be Done.

Thy will it bidst the weak be strong,
It bidst the strong be just.
No lips to fawn, no hands to beg
No brow to seek the dust.
Whenever man oppresses man
Beneath the liberal sun, -
O Lord be there,- Thine arm make bare
Thy righteous Will Be Done.

From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

This poem appears in the Helen Nicolay papers along with her correspondence with Secretary of State John Hay. If her good friend sent this poem at the time of her father's death, no mention is made of it in any of their letters.

to the State Dept. several other boxes of his important papers (were) stored at my house.

As I am just leaving town for my summer at Holderness, New Hampshire, to be gone several months, I have asked Col. Hay to help me dispose of them more safely, and he has had them sent to the State Dept. to be kept with the others, subject to your order. So at present they are all there.

Very sincerely yours
(Helen Nicolay)

Hon. Robt. T. Lincoln*

After her father's death Helen Nicolay became quite busy in an effort to complete his unfinished manuscript. Her first step, after having added a considerable amount of copy, was to submit it to her father's best friend and former collaborator. The manuscript was sent to Colonel Hay with this letter:

Dear Colonel Hay

After seeing how rapidly you read Chinese MSS I have less compunction in bothering you with this.

Will you be good enough to look at it and tell me what I must do before sending it on to New York? I have stared at it so long that I see nothing but spots.

I have stolen from you shamelessly, Have made long things short and good things bad and done those things that I ought not to have done from the first page to the last. The trouble is that I have done so many of them I don't know where I am at.

Pencil marks and criticisms will be much appreciated, and I am quite prepared to have you tell me that it is "no go" — that I must give it up — or try again

Sincerely, though dejected
Helen N.

*For additional correspondence between Robert T. Lincoln and Miss Nicolay in regard to the President's papers, see *Lincoln Lore* 1437, 1438, November, 1957, December, 1957 entitled "Some Correspondence Regarding A Missing Copy Of The Gettysburg Address."

(Continued to the February issue)



Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation . . . Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Editor
Published each month by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 1548

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

February, 1967

Some Correspondence Between John Hay and Helen Nicolay about her father, the Sixteenth President, royalty payments, investments and the problems of authorship

Part 2

(Continued from
the January issue)

From the correspondence which is available, it appears that it was the concluding chapters that gave Miss Nicolay the most trouble. On December 4, 1901 Colonel Hay, who was no mean literary critic, made the following comments:

Dear Miss Nicolay:

I herewith return the copy you gave me, to which I have given the last three nights.

I congratulate you on the success with which you have done this last part of the work. I think you have made a remarkably clear, connected and vivid narrative of Chapter 37. In regard to the last chapter, "Lincoln's Fame," I read your father's address first, and thought that that would make an admirable ending by itself, but on reading your chapter, I see you have taken the greater part of mine and added to it your father's address. I think that is all right if you prefer it that way; but do you not think that taking so much verbatim from the History will necessitate calling your work on the title page, an abridgment of the original work? Still, this is only for your own consideration.

Sincerely Yours

John Hay

In a letter dated "Thursday" Helen Nicolay thanked Colonel Hay for his comments concerning the manuscript:

Dear Colonel Hay:

I am afraid you "broke your neck" over those chapters, in order to send them back quickly.



JOHN HAY AS SECRETARY OF STATE

From the John Hay Library of Brown University

John Milton Hay — 1838-1905

American statesman, born in Salem, Indiana. Private secretary to Abraham Lincoln (1860-65). U. S. Assistant Secretary of State (1878). Emerged (in 1870-90) as an important literary figure, with publication of his *Pike County Ballads And Other Pieces* (1871), *Castilian Days* (1871), *The Bread-Winners* (pub. anon. 1884), *Poems* (1890), and with John Nicolay, *Abraham Lincoln, A History* (10 vols., 1890), *Abraham Lincoln — Complete Works* (2 vols., 1894 and expanded to 12 vols. in 1905). U. S. Ambassador to Great Britain (1897-98). U. S. Secretary of State (1898-1905); negotiated Hay-Pauncefote treaty (1901) providing for construction of Panama Canal and superseding Clayton-Bulwer treaty.

Thank you for the trouble you have taken, and the suggestions you made. I fear there must be some mistake however, there are so few of the latter.

I am glad you think the address will do for an ending. I would rather use it. Perhaps I can tuck in the two little paragraphs I most wanted from your chapter — the one about his literary rank and that about his command of military problems — at some other place. Anyway I will try, and if you do not approve, a blue pencil will remedy the trouble

Very sincerely yours
Helen Nicolay

The P. O. D. sent me a polite note and the desired information—with additions. It is a great thing to know the Secretary of State.

Still concerned with the details of her father's manuscript, Helen Nicolay wrote Colonel Hay about a quotation from Secretary of State William H. Seward. Hay answered the query on January 16, 1902 and inserted a paragraph about financial matters:

Dear Helen:

I am extremely sorry I cannot remember anything about the quotation from Seward. If I were you I would take it for granted that your father, who was one of the most accurate of men knew what he was saying.

I have arranged that matter of the draft, and given Mr. Brice a bond which will save the Riggs Bank from ruin in any contingency.

Yours Sincerely
John Hay



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

John G. Nicolay

A photograph taken on September 16, 1891 in the studio of Charles Parker, 477 Penn. Ave., Washington, D.C.

While in New York City, on February 27, 1902, Helen Nicolay wrote Colonel Hay about her visit with her publisher:

Dear Colonel Hay

I saw the Century people yesterday, and had a little talk with Mr. Scott, who impresses me as not knowing exactly what he wants to do with the MS now that he has got it.

I gave my vote for one volume instead of two, on general principles, and incidentally was not enthusiastically over illustration. Remarkd that I was very anxious to have a good index — and was invited to make it myself.

Mr. Scott suggested a title something like this:

A Short Life
of
Abraham Lincoln
Condensed from Nicolay and Hay's
Abraham Lincoln: A History
by
John G. Nicolay

He made quite a point of possible misconception on the part of the public if the longer work were not mentioned — said they might think you and my father had disagreed; and that as the History had become an Authority with a big A. it was well to utilize its standing in bringing out this shorter life.

I told him that I would be satisfied with any decision you and he reaches on the subject.

The weather has been abominable and New York streets are in a condition bordering in spots on impassibility

With love to Mrs. Hay and Alice

Sincerely yours
Helen Nicolay

Mr. Scott offered, in an apologetic way, the usual ten percent royalty, saying it was all that they ever paid on histories. I wonder why he took the trouble to explain since it is customary.

H N

Colonel Hay answered Miss Nicolay's February 27th letter (1902) with one dated February 28th:

My Dear Helen:

I have a letter from Mr. Scott mentioning the same

things you refer to, and I have written to him saying you have my full and unreserved authority to make any use of our title page that may seem good to you.

Sincerely Yours

John Hay

The Century Company, following Mr. Scott's suggestions as to format including title page, illustrations and index, began to take the preliminary steps which would lead to the printing of the Nicolay manuscript. Meanwhile, Helen Nicolay, back home from New York City, wrote John Hay on March 13, 1902:

Dear Colonel Hay:

The Century people took it for granted that you meant the returns from the "Works" to come to me as well as from the "Life" — so they sent me their check for \$69.00 the years harvest. I received it as I was about to take the train for New York, and feeling sure that you were not at the moment pining for the \$23.00 which I herewith enclose, I left the whole matter until my return.

I reached home last night, and this morning received two copies of an "Agreement" concerning the shorter Life to look over and sign.

Will you run your eye over it before I send it back. I'll try to appear at your house tomorrow (Friday) about two o'clock, on the chance of finding you "at home" If a Dip (diplomat) or a Potentate gets ahead of me, I'll try again.

Greetings to Mrs. Hay.

Sincerely yours

Helen Nicolay

In answer to Miss Nicolay's March 13th letter Colonel Hay replied:

Dear Helen:

It was settled ages ago. Both belong to you. The Century people know their affairs.

Yours Sincerely John Hay

The book *The Short Life of Abraham Lincoln* was the reason for additional correspondence between Helen Nicolay and John Hay. In a letter bearing only the date "Friday" Miss Nicolay wrote as follows:

Dear Colonel Hay:

Thank you for "Harpers." My attention had been called to the article by the little book-seller who has a shop across the street.

I answered the letter from Mr. Scott by stating the exact facts in the case — that you and my father had not gone over the condensation together — that he did much of the work at Holderness summer before last, since which time neither of you had leisure to go into details when you were together. I told him that after I had seen you, I would write him again.

When you have time and strength will you mind coming up and looking hastily at the MS? It is on pencil paper in my handwriting, of course, and makes a pile about four inches high.

There are some other things I shall want to ask you about too, if I may. If you could let me know what hour of the day you would be most likely to come I would make a point of being in the house at that time — not binding you to a day — but just being on hand at that hour until you found a day on which you could come. I shall go to see Mrs. Hay very soon. I passed the house the day you returned, but thought, a visit then would be a little too prompt.

Yours sincerely

Helen Nicolay

The correspondence between Colonel Hay and Miss Nicolay does not give a clue to the date the Secretary of State visited the Nicolay home. However, on May 30, 1902, Miss Nicolay wrote Colonel Hay from 52 Trumbull Street, New Haven, Connecticut about the identification of a name for the index. Her letter follows:

Dear Colonel Hay:

Was the Browning who returned the thanks of Illinois and etc., at the time of Lincoln's first nomination for President, O. H. Browning?

I am getting along pretty well with the index, but occasionally wish myself next door to the Library of Congress.

Best greetings to Mrs. Hay.

Sincerely yours

Helen Nicolay

The very next day John Hay replied to his correspondent:

Dear Miss Nicolay:

The Browning who returned thanks was our old friend O. H. Browning

Yours faithfully

John Hay

In October, when the Nicolay book came from the press, Miss Nicolay wrote to her good friend who was visiting in New Hampshire:

Dear Colonel Hay:

I mail you a copy of the Short Biography which has just reached me. Being smothered in the details of "moving" I had not wit enough to ask the Century people to send it to you direct.

I could get along without the astronomy and botany on the cover — but that is a small matter. Barring that don't you think the volume is just about what my father would have liked?

With love to Mrs. Hay, and endless thanks for your kindness and patience in helping me with the MS.

Sincerely yours

Helen Nicolay

Upon learning from a press release that the Secretary of State was back in Washington, Miss Nicolay wrote a second letter:

Dear Colonel Hay

I see by this morning's paper that you are back in town. Not knowing you were coming so soon I mailed a copy of the Short Biography to your New Hampshire address on Thursday. Will it be forwarded to you?

I am in the midst of getting the house empty to turn over on the 15th to the tenant. It is a terrible undertaking. I tear up papers all day long and never seem to make no impression on the mass to be examined.

I expect to go away for three weeks about Friday next. Mail sent here will be forwarded to me until my return.

Hoping that you have come home in good health and spirits

Sincerely yours

Helen Nicolay

Colonel Hay, it appears, would eventually get his copy of the "Short Life" because he wrote Miss Nicolay at her old address on October 6, 1902 as follows:

My dear Helen:

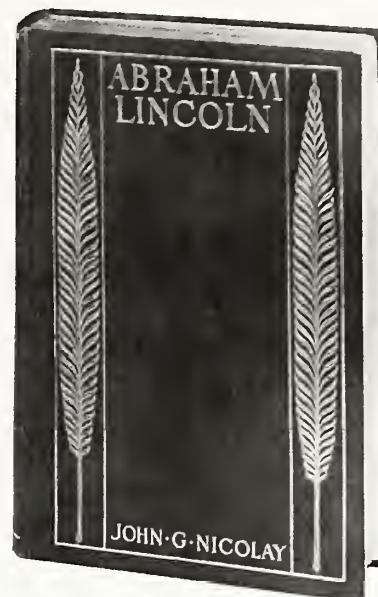
I have your note and Mrs. Hay tells me she has sent



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Helen Nicolay
1866-1954

This photograph of Helen Nicolay made in the later years of her life, depicts her in her study, seated at her father's desk and in the studious and historic atmosphere of the Lincoln-Nicolay-Hay era.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

The first edition of John G. Nicolay's book, *A Short Life of Abraham Lincoln* (M. 1376), published posthumously by The Century Co., New York, N.Y., in October, 1902. This book has appeared in nine different editions, the latest of which came from the press in 1942. The total sales of the book in 1915 amounted to 35,000 copies. Miss Nicolay wrote John Hay that "I could get along without the astronomy [13 stars appear on the spine] and botany on the cover. . . ."

back the book from Newbury. I have not received it, but shall in a day or so

Mrs. Hay is all alone, packing up things in the deserted house. The wedding [Alice Hay married James Wolcott Wadsworth, Jr., September 30, 1902] was a very pretty one in spite of the rain. We all regretted you could not come

Yours faithfully

John Hay

Upon receiving the "Short Life" and after giving some hours to the reading of the work, Colonel Hay wrote Miss Nicolay on October 21, 1901:

Dear Helen:

I gave most of the day yesterday to looking over your book. I find it remarkably well done. No work in existence has so much of the history of the time in so little space.

I send you as much of my work as I have been able to find. Several of the chapters are boiled down to a page but many are not even touched. I have not time to go over them. You are welcome to anything you can find in them.

I am writing the Century to send any balance coming to your father and me, to you, as usual. I make you a present of all my right and title in the History.

When you are done with these chapters of mine, I would like to have them back. Of course, I shall never look at them again — but I like to fool myself with the idea that I shall.

Yours faithfully

John Hay

Due to the receipt of royalty checks, a number of money transactions took place between the two authors. On October 28, 1903 Col. Hay wrote Miss Nicolay as follows:

Here my dear Helen, is your 500 Samoleons. Before another year rolls around I hope I may happen upon some security that will set still long enough to be bought.

Yours faithfully

John Hay

On different occasions Colonel Hay assisted Miss Nicolay in the purchase of stocks and bonds, and in October, 1901, he secured for her 100 shares of Western Union stock for \$9,150. Again, in 1904 he served as her financial advisor, and on January 22nd she received the

following letter from a second vice president of the Trust Department of the Metropolitan Trust Company, 37 Wall Street, New York City:

Dear Miss Nicolay:

At the request of Hon. John Hay, we herewith hand you by registered mail certificate No. 16750 for 100 shares of Preferred Capital Stock of the Continental Tobacco Company standing in your name (also bank dividend order for your convenience.) Kindly advise Mr. Hay of the receipt of the Stock and also send acknowledgment of its receipt to this company, obliging,

Yours very truly
(Unidentifiable signature)

On January 23, 1904 Colonel Hay wrote Miss Nicolay from Greenwood, Thomasville, Georgia:

Dear Helen:

I have, after much inquiry, concluded that "Continental Tobacco Preferred" is about as good an investment as there is at present in sight, and have therefore bought with your money One Hundred Shares of it at a cost of \$10,450. The little balance I beg you to accept as a "slight but sincere etc. Christmas and birthday present." I owe you, in various wages too numerous to mention, more than that — even so much more.

The stock pays 7% that is to say \$175 quarterly, beginning April next. It was bought at a bargain owing to the "slump." My friends think it is worth a much higher price.

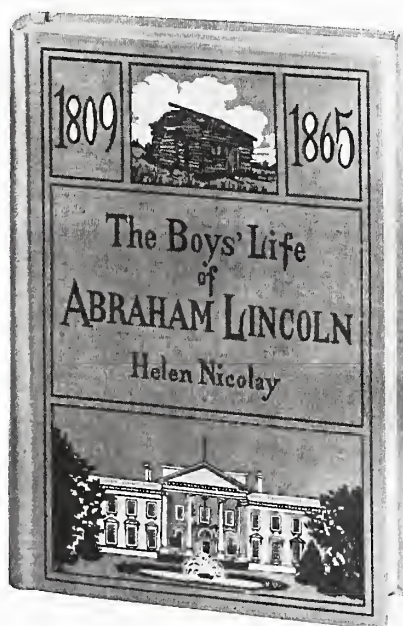
You can cancel my note when you receive the shares and return it to me at your convenience, preferably not for two weeks — as I shall be here for that time.

Yours sincerely
John Hay

On the same day that Colonel Hay wrote Miss Nicolay she sent a letter of acknowledgment to the Metropolitan Trust Company, and on the following day she wrote her financial advisor:

Dear Colonel Hay:

Yesterday came a communication from the Metropolitan Trust Co. of New York enclosing a certificate for 100 shares of Preferred Stock of the Continental Tobacco Co. with the request that I inform you of its safe arrival.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Helen Nicolay's book, *The Boys' Life of Abraham Lincoln* (M. 1509), was published by The Century Co., New York, N.Y., in October, 1906. With numerous illustrations by Jay Hambidge and others, this book has appeared in nine different editions, the latest issue coming from the press in 1943. This work does not contain a preface, due to the fact that John Hay declined an invitation to write one.

I have never before used tobacco in any form, but foresee that I may become quite dependent on this. Thank you for hunting out a suitable investment for me.

I return two notes which belong to you rather than to me at this stage of the game, and also a check for the excess interest you paid me last autumn.

I hope you are growing strong rapidly. The papers said you "stepped briskly from the train" when you reached your journey's end. Did they expect you to ride out on a dromedary — or that your wings had sprouted?

Sincerely yours
Helen Nicolay

Again on January 25, 1904 Miss Nicolay wrote Colonel Hay a business letter:

Dear Colonel Hay:

How very awkward it is to go off half cocked! Here I mailed your note this morning — and not only mailed it to you at Thomasville where you do not want it, but sent it uncanceled. If you'll bring it back I'll write things all over it.

As for the "Christmas and birthday present" you are just as good to me as you can be — but don't you see that if I should let you do that, I'd feel that I could never trouble you again about money matters? And that would cut me off from a vast deal of comfort.

So please don't ask me to accept it. Let me cling to my blessed privilege of bothering you about my small affairs whenever I see fit.

For sometime I've had \$500. that I mean to consult you about. I've put it off from day to day because you were sick and miserable. This providentially answers my question before it is asked, and greatly relieves my mind.

Thank you again — a thousand times
Yours most sincerely
Helen Nicolay

On January 27th Colonel Hay wrote Miss Nicolay from Thomasville:

Dear Helen:

Here is your check, which, as I explained in my last letter, does not belong to me. If such wealth impedes your travel through the needle eye, you have my condolences.

I am so well and hungry down here that I shall have to have two special cars to carry me home

Yours sincerely
John Hay

The very next day Colonel Hay, upon receiving his correspondent's letter wrote Miss Nicolay again:

Dear Helen:

Our game of cross-purposes continues. I have your letter and check. You are incorrigible. I take your money, which now assumes the form of a present from you to me, and am very much obliged. I see now how stupid and awkward my letter was. "Sometimes, sometimes—"

Very sincerely
John Hay

Another letter regarding finances, which is beyond explanation due to a lack of adequate information was written by one of the correspondents. On October 30, 1904 Miss Nicolay wrote Colonel Hay:

Dear Colonel Hay:

Your valuable letter reached me this morning. Somebody had directed it to The Greysboro, a prehistoric address of the Spofford's,* but it seems to have lost no time in finding me. The check is over-large as only \$7000 of the ten have been on your conscience since last autumn. The other three were added to the load in May.

This must not be allowed to escape you in the final adjustment.

Very sincerely yours
Helen Nicolay

Miss Nicolay in the years following her father's death began a study of what was eventually to be called *The Boys' Life of Abraham Lincoln*. It was published in October 1906 by The Century Company. The book proved to be a successful publishing project as it appeared in nine different editions, one dated edition appearing as late as 1943.

*Miss Nicolay was friendly with the family of Ainsworth R. Spofford, the Librarian of Congress, an appointee of President Lincoln.

(Continued to the March issue)

Some Correspondence Between John Hay and Helen Nicolay

(Continued from the February issue)

Part 3

It would naturally be expected that the author would submit the manuscript to her old friend, Colonel Hay.

On December 19, 1904 Hay wrote Miss Nicolay:

My dear Helen:

I read your book yesterday with the greatest interest. I have only one fault to find with it, and I imagine that is entirely an imaginary one. It is well enough written for grown folks, and your publisher may possibly — though I hope not — feel that this is an objection in a book written primarily for young people. But, as I have said before to you, I do not consider that quality in the least objectionable. I know the books that I enjoyed the most when I was a child were books written for grown ups. I have no criticism to make and no changes to propose. It seems to me an excellent piece of work.

Yours faithfully

John Hay

To give some authenticity to "The Boys' Life" The Century Company suggested to Miss Nicolay that a "little preface" by Mr. John Hay would be most appropriate. This idea was incorporated into a letter dated January 28, 1905.

Dear Miss Nicolay:

We have had the manuscript of your boys' "Lincoln" carefully read, and it is very much liked here. I think we all agree in respect to a few changes or condensations in some of the earlier chapters, which we believe would not be difficult for you to make.

I am writing now to inquire whether you are likely to be in New York shortly, so that we might have a conference. It is so much easier to talk over a matter of this kind than attempt to arrange it by correspondence, but if you are not coming here possibly we might send some one to Washington to meet you there.

Our idea would be to bring the book out for next autumn's sales. To do this it should soon be put in type, so that we might have dummies for our traveling salesmen to show during the summer months at the time they visit the booksellers.

Do you think you could get Mr. John Hay to write a little preface, however brief? His doing so would be a great help to the sale of the book, in the beginning, at least.

Believe me

... Chichester

After receiving Mr. Chichester's letter, Miss Nicolay wrote Colonel Hay on "Wednesday morning":

Dear Colonel Hay:

Do you remember the paragraph about the preface in Mr. Chichester's note I showed you the other day

Of course it is needless to say how pleased I would be if you would write a few words; but I haven't the least idea that you want to do such a thing. Indeed I think you told me once that you made it the rule of your life never to write preface's for other people's books. I can imagine the avalanche of MSS. that would descend upon you if you once broke that rule, and how you would have to scratch away with your pen fifteen hours a day to keep from being totally smothered. And what would Diplomacy do then?

Seriously, the suggestion seemed so far-fetched that I did not give it a moments thought, and absolutely forgot to say anything about it when we were talking about the matter of the letter.

It is borne in upon me that Mr. Chichester will not have forgotten however, and that he will ask that particular question before all others — and that Mr. Scott will also ask it if I see him. So would you mind Scribbling a word on this to let me know if I am right as to your position? I would not for the world bring woe upon you — but if you are just looking for trouble — behold — the Boy's Lincoln — at your feet.

Sincerely yours

Helen Nicolay

In rather shaky handwriting John Hay answered Miss Nicolay's letter with a pencilled note, written in bed from his residence at 800 Sixteenth Street, Lafayette Square:

Dear Helen:

I can't do it — and you are so sweetly reasonable about it that I do not suffer much in refusing

Yours

J. H.

In the early months of 1905 Helen Nicolay made some tentative plans to visit Mexico, and before Colonel Hay made his last trip to Europe in search of health, she related to him her desire to visit that country. From Naples, Italy on April 5th he wrote her as follows:

Dear Helen

I was so worthless during my last days in Washington I did nothing I ought. But I have addressed a letter to our Ambassador in Mexico telling him to look out for you and do everything for you that he would for the Queen of Hearts herself. That will avail you, if you go, and this will let you know the letter has gone, whether you go or not.

We have had a wonderful voyage. The ship is steady as a church. Mrs. Hay has been on deck every day — a wonderful record. Such a thing has not happened since she was a child.

She sends her love

Yours faithfully

John Hay

Miss Nicolay was unable to make the trip to Mexico and on April 25th she wrote Colonel Hay as follows:

Dear Colonel Hay:

Yours of April 1st came to me last night. I feel so reproached! Mrs. Hay's little note was received and I was much touched at her taking time to write it before the ship sailed, when you were feeling so ill and wretched. My impulse was to answer it at once, but on reflection I concluded that since you had run away from folks you would probably rather not have them reaching after you with letters. So I planned to have a note waiting for her on your return. She gave me your message to Mr. Babcock. It did not occur to me that you would do anything more about the letter to Mexico. Today I learn that you have had the miserable thing on your mind! I am so sorry. Thank you a thousand times — and please do not have such a tender conscience any more.

As it turned out, we were unable to go. Miss Fletcher fell ill and the weather jumped into midsummer — two reasons for abandoning it. We may go in the fall — but I doubt it.

Do you care for the latest Boy's Lincoln news? I'm invited to let St. Nicholas print it as a serial — beginning next November — \$500.00 for that, and what fate wills for the book, later. This makes me chuckle, as I happen to know it was considered "too instructive" in February. It must be woefully demoralized by those changes I made after coming home from New York.

At present the Spoffords and I are living in a world of blossoms out at the country place. Everything that can bloom is doing it — all at once. And I am planning to go to Holderness about May 15th to enjoy the spring all over again.

The tulips are gay in front of your house. So is the gold-tipped iron fence. But the tulips, like the Yanks get "a little the best of it!"

People are very much gratified at the news of your improvement. I overhear conversations about you on the street almost every time I go into town. Some of them pretend great intimacy. Others are frankly speculative. All are kindly. This morning one woman remarked to another that she hoped you'd come back soon — you were "such a nice man to have around"

Please give my best love to Mrs. Hay — and come back — not too soon — much as we like to have you "around"

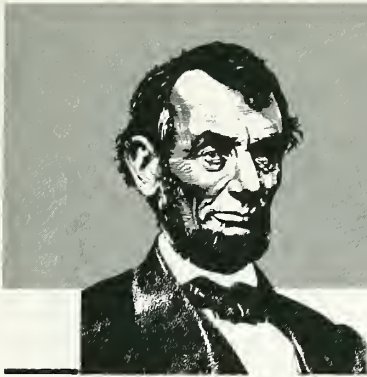
Sincerely yours

Helen N.

These last two letters may have ended the correspondence between Colonel Hay and Miss Nicolay. The Hays returned to the United States on June 15th and the ailing Secretary of State went directly to the State Department. On June 24th Hay went to his summer home, "The Fells," at Newbury, on Lake Sunapee, New Hampshire. After his arrival in New Hampshire, his physical condition grew alarmingly worse, and he died about three o'clock in the morning of July 1, 1905. He was buried in the Lake View Cemetery in Cleveland, Ohio.

(Continued on page 4)





Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation . . . Dr. R. Gerald McMurry, Editor
Published each month by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 1550

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

April, 1967

Lincoln Newspaper Clippings

Editor's Note: The most exhaustive source of information about Abraham Lincoln in the Foundation's Library-Museum collection is the newspaper clipping files which utilize some fifty odd steel filing drawers. The clippings have been mounted and filed under approximately 3,000 different Lincoln subjects. It is reasonable to suppose that in a collection so voluminous, there would be a few clippings which would have considerable historical significance. Some of these are featured in this issue of *Lincoln Lore*.

R.G.M.

Newspaper Clippings Which Lincoln Read

President Abraham Lincoln's close association with the Rev. Phineas D. Gurley, D.D., the pastor of The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, is well known. The Lincoln family attended the regular services of Dr. Gurley's church, occupying pew number 14. Then, too, there is considerable evidence that Lincoln and Gurley often visited together, held conferences and discussed religious and other matters pertinent to the problems of the City of Washington, D.C. during the Civil War.

It was also the practice of the Lincoln family to send gifts to the pastor. On one occasion, Mrs. Lincoln sent poultry from Baltimore and a barrel of choice Northern apples to the Presbyterian manse.

Dr. Gurley was present at the bedside of the President following his assassination. Later, at the request of the Lincoln family, Dr. Gurley conducted the funeral services which were held in the East Room of the White House on April 19, 1865. His sermon was titled "Have Faith In God"—Mark 11:22. On June 1, 1865, a day appointed by President Andrew Johnson as one of "humiliation and prayer," Dr. Gurley preached a second Lincoln sermon, in the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, titled "The Voice of the Rod." Both of the above-mentioned sermons have been published.

Dr. Gurley's presence at the Petersen House on Tenth Street across from the Ford Theatre, was a comfort for Mrs. Lincoln and her son "through the hours of that interminable night," and weeks later the President's widow presented to the clergyman a hat worn by her husband (for the first and only time) at his Second Inaugural.

Sometime during the Fall of 1862, President Lincoln presented to Dr. Gurley some newspaper clippings relating to the military situation in general and the Battle of Antietam in particular, with some comments concerning the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.

These clippings are pasted on both sides of a piece of cardboard measuring 11" x 17 1/4", with an affidavit bearing the date of February 5, 1914:

"These clippings, regarding the various Battles of the War of the Rebellion, were used by Mr. Lincoln, and were given by him, to my Father, at various times.

Emma H. Gurley Adams"

For many years the newspaper clippings which Lincoln read were kept in the files of the Lincoln Library-Museum of the Foundation. Within the last few weeks they have been placed on exhibit where they have attracted a considerable amount of attention on the part of our many visitors.

Additional information concerning Lincoln and Gurley can be found in *A History of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, One Hundred Fifty-Seven Years, 1803 to 1961* by Frank E. Edgington, 1962. Two of the chapters of this book are entitled "The Lincoln Family and the New York Avenue Church" and "The Lincoln Pew." This church should be included in the itinerary of every Lincoln student who visits the Nation's capital city. In addition to Lincoln's pew, one of the most outstanding exhibits in the church's Lincoln parlor is an original preliminary draft of the Emancipation Proclamation, a gift of Barney Balaban.

NEW YORK, Wednesday, August 19, 1862.

These clippings, regarding the various Battles of the War of the Rebellion, were used by Mr. Lincoln, and were given by him, to my Father, at various times.

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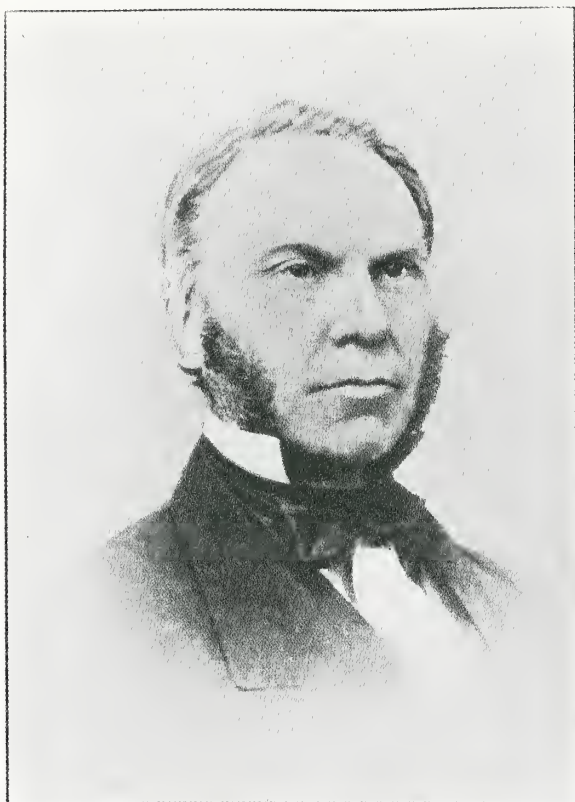
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From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Original newspaper clippings (Fall of 1862) used and read by President Lincoln and later presented to Dr. Phineas D. Gurley.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Rev. Phineas D. Gurley, D.D., pastor of The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, 1854 - 1868.

The Grand Presidential Party February 5, 1862

In early February of 1862 Mrs. Abraham Lincoln (and the President) gave a White House ball, an innovation in the social customs of first ladies.¹ The February 5th affair was to be the first of three "receptions by invitation" to take the place of many costly formal dinners, and to provide more sociability than was possible at the large public levees.

One Washington newspaper reporter described the event, in the sub-title of his article, as "The Gayeties of the Republican Court — The Grand Party of the White House — Gathering of Dames, Demoiselles, Diplomats, Dignitaries of State, And Army and Naval Officers — Elegant Toilettes and Brilliant Uniforms and Decorations — Generous and Hearty Hospitality at the White House, &c., &c., &c."²

The Washington *Sunday Morning Chronicle* of February 9, 1862 carried a report of the reception under the byline of a reporter called "An Idler." The title of his news story is "Inklings of Idleness."

Perhaps the most intimate behind-the-scenes account of the reception is found in excerpts from letters written by John G. Nicolay, Lincoln's private secretary, to his fiancée, Tharena Bates, who lived in Pittsfield, Illinois.³ The first excerpt is from a letter dated at Washington on February 2, 1862:

"Mrs. Lincoln has determined to make an innovation in the social customs of the White House, and accordingly has issued tickets for a party of five or six hundred guests on Wednesday evening next. For years dinners and receptions have been the only "Executive" social diversion or entertainments. But from what I can learn "La Reine" has determined to abrogate dinners and institute parties in their stead. How it will work remains yet to be seen. Half the city is jubilant at being invited, while the other half is furious at being left out in the cold."

The second excerpt is from Nicolay's letter dated at Washington on February 6, 1862 (the day following the reception):

"The grand party came off last night according to program, and was altogether a very respectable if not a brilliant success. Many of the invited guests did not come, so the rooms were not at all overcrowded. Of course the ladies were all beautifully dressed, having no doubt brought all their skill and resources to a culmination for this event. A lamentable spirit of flunkeyism pervades all the higher classes of society. . . . Those who were here therefore (some of them having sought and almost begged their invitations) will be forever happy in the recollection of the favor enjoyed, because their vanity has been tickled with the thought that they have attained something which others had not. I will not attempt the labor of a detailed description of the affair. The Jenkinses of the newspapers will do that more *in extenso* than I possibly could. Suffice it to say that the East room filled with well-dressed guests looked very beautiful, that the supper was magnificent, and that when all else was over, by way of an interesting *finale* the servants (a couple of them) much moved by wrath and wine, had a jolly little knock-down in the kitchen damaging in its effects to sundry heads and champaign bottles. This last item is *entre nous*.

"I enclose one of the invitation cards to show how they were got up."

In a letter dated at Washington on February 11, 1862 Nicolay wrote Miss Bates a third letter mentioning the grand party and the illness of the "President's little boys":

"I enclose you one or two newspaper slips describing the great party of last week. Since then one of the President's little boys has been so sick as to have absorbed pretty much all his attention, and the next — the youngest, is now threatened with a similar sickness."

The Lincoln Library-Museum of the Lincoln National Life Foundation has the two original "newspaper slips" which John sent to Tharena.⁴ Because of the interesting details of the grand ball the clipping from the Washington *Morning Chronicle* of February 9, 1862 is reprinted.

Inklings of Idleness

The intimation that there was to be an evening party at the White House, followed by an issue of handsomely engraved cards of invitation from "The President and Mrs. Lincoln," naturally caused a decided sensation in metropolitan society. The Union residents, who have heard their secession neighbors croak over the decadence of "good society" here, since the Gwins, Thompsons, Browns, Cobbs, and others have gone to Dixie, were delighted to find that Mrs. Lincoln was about to eclipse all the entertainments where conspirators had met at hospitable boards, and to follow the example set by the ladies of Washington, Adams, and Tyler. Some who were not invited endeavored to denounce the affair as exclusive and un-democratic, but to no avail; neither were the predictions of a few sour old non-invited maidens, that it would prove a "failure," realized. The word "fail" is not in the Lincoln dictionary, and the arrangements were all successfully carried out. It was a decided, a perfect success, and the joys of realization certainly eclipsed the delights of anticipation.

The White House

The cards of invitation requested the presence of the guests at nine o'clock, and soon after that hour carriages began to drive up to the White House, and stop beneath the broad portico for those within them to alight. A force of the Metropolitan police, in their new uniform, kept the curious crowd from the doorway as the guests passed in, surrendering their cards to the ushers or guard. The guests were ushered up stairs, where spacious apartments were fitted up as dressing rooms, with guardians of outer garments, who gave checks, by which their owners could reclaim them. The ladies, as they emerged from their tiring-room in the full glory of evening costume, were taken in charge by their attendant cavaliers, and escorted down stairs, to pay respects to the host and hostess.

The East Room

The East room, universally regarded as one of the finest State apartments in Christendom, never appeared to more advantage than it did on Wednesday evening. Newly furnished, in exquisite taste, with a monster

carpet, equal in beauty to ancient tapestry, and with an elegantly painted ceiling, this noble hall was illuminated by three large chandeliers, and its large mirrors reflected the gay and varied crowds who filled it—jewels in a rich casket.

There was no formality. President Lincoln stood nearly in the centre of the room, receiving his guests with cordial greetings, and occasionally saying a pleasant word or two to those with whom he was well acquainted. Near him stood Mrs. Lincoln, in a becoming half-mourning garb, testifying her respect for the memory of the Prince-Consort, whose son had recently been her guest, and the representative of whose nation was to be present. It was a white satin dress, with a train, deeply flowered with black lace, which was looped up at intervals with knots of black and white ribbon. Her head-dress was a floral diadem of black and white flowers, with a dropping bunch of cape myrtle, and she wore a full set of pearls, with a beautiful bouquet.

The Parlors

The three parlors, known from the prevalent color of the paper-hangings of each as the red, the blue, and the green rooms, were ornamented for the occasion with green wreaths and with exquisite bouquets of rare green-house plants.

Grouped in the blue parlor, during most of the evening, were the diplomatic corps, in the scrupulous evening dress of European gentlemen, which contrasted strangely with the frock-coats, thick boots, and ungloved hands of a few citizens of Hail Columbia. They also wore the ribbons and stars of the decorations of honor which have been bestowed on them, and it was noticed that, although their ladies were all dressed with marked elegance, especially those from the French legation, none equalled the daughter of Gen. Cass, now Madame Von Limburg, who wore a blue brocade, trimmed with rich lace.

In the red parlor, with Washington gazing down



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation
Therena Bates

A cracked ambrotype photograph from the Nicolay collection. In the files of the collection is to be found the following printed announcement: "Married in Pittsfield, Illinois, on Thursday, June 15, 1865, by Rev. Mr. Burnham, Mr. John G. Nicolay, late of Washington, D. C. to Miss Therena Bates of Pittsfield."

from canvass on them, were several young couples, who were evidently, oblivious of all that was transpiring around them. Their names, Mr. Editor, you will have sooner or later, grouped under the head of marriages.

The Guests

The President's Cabinet was, of course, present, and Secretary Seward was ubiquitous in his attentions to the ladies of the legations, as if determined to preserve *l'intente cordiale*. Mrs. Stanton was simply yet elegantly dressed in black silk, trimmed with white ribbon, edged with black; Miss Kate Chase looked bewitchingly in white silk, with a simple bunch of jessamine as her only ornaments; Mrs. Welles wore black velvet, with lace head-dress and collar. As for the Secretaries, every one knows how they look, and need I add that those who hold the portfolios of the War and of Marine Departments wore their beards—it's a way they have.

Vice President Hamlin, with his young and attractive lady, (who was becomingly attired in pink,) had over a two-third quorum of his Upper House, although not Bright. Senators Harris, Wilson, Hale, Simmons, Sherman, Chandler, Clarke, and Browning, were accompanied by their ladies, and the Senator from New Hampshire had also with him his fascinating daughter, whose toilette is always faultless. The Border States were further represented by Senators Garret Davis, Kennedy, Pearce, and others, while Justices Clifford, Wayne and Greer, with some of their officers, testified that the Supreme Court "still lives."

Mr. Speaker Grow had not as full a house, but there were goodly delegations, and Massachusetts, in particular, was well represented by Mesdames Rice, Train, Gooch, and Thomas. Col. Lawrence, our consul-general at Florence, was present with Mrs. Lawrence, and ex-Mayor Berret, with his lady, was prominent in the crowd.

The military men were not numerous, as but few save generals commanding divisions were invited. Gen. McClellan wore his full uniform, and was accompanied by Mrs. McClellan (who wore a white satin dress, trimmed with flowers, where the flowers were looped up) and by her sister, Mrs. Marcy. General and Mrs. Marcy were also present. General McDowell and his accomplished lady were the objects of marked attention. Mrs. Buell and Miss Mason represented the gallant Kentucky commander, and Capt. Griffin, with his bride, was the admiration of the young ladies. General Fremont, in undress uniform, escorted Mrs. Fremont, who was plainly dressed in simple white, yet whose vivacious conversation sparkled more brilliantly than jewels.

General Heintzelman, the Porters, Hancock, Blenker, Hooper, Keyes, Stone, Doubleday, Casey, and Shields were there, and Young Duc de Chartres seemed well pleased with the "Republican Court," while Prince Salm Salm evidently desired a waltz, and Robert "Prince of Rails" Lincoln was gallantly attentive to the fair demoiselles.

N. P. Willis, with a dozen or so of those graceless scamps, "our own correspondents;" Cyrus McCormick, esq., the inventor; Clark Mills, the sculptor; Gardner, the photographic artist; Mrs. Don Piatt, once "Bell Smith abroad," but everywhere "at home;" Squier, the historian; and two or three governors of States, with a small sprinkling of politicians, a few upper clerks, and an ex-Congressman, constituted the chinking-in of the mass of humanity in sombre, undertaker-like broadcloth.

I had promised to say more about the ladies—and to thus emulate the sneered-at "Jenkins," whose crinoline chronicles all read—but I can't do it. So my fair readers must imagine the East-room to have been a huge kaleidoscope, not filled with colored glass, but with a medley of bright jewels and bright eyes, (assorted colors) silks and satins, tulle and tarletane, velvet and swansdown, tiny slippers and delicate gloves, scented fans, red cheeks, (one lady had only rouged one side,) ears like curved sea-shells, uniforms and gold lace, stars and garters (of knighthood,) and other minor matters, as "citizens generally" close a procession. Imagine all this—then twirl your kaliedescope around and around

to martial music, and form an idea how the bright fragments fell into symmetrical patterns—then broke up, moved on, and so ever changed and varied the scene. No language can describe that shifting mosaic of beauty and gay colors, as uniforms and foreign stars—gems, laces, and illusion—like all the rainbows since the flood, were blended in confusion.

The Supper

There was no dancing, but a supper fit for the Epicureans of old. Such was the verdict of those present, who were admitted to view the tables, after they had been fully spread with the culinary triumphs and quaint confections of Maillard, of New York. The congressional dining-room was the scene of the banquet, and on the long table was the *plateau*, on the centre of which was a vase filled and wreathed with exotics. The flanking ornaments cunningly wrought in confectionery, represented the steam-frigate Union, a hermitage, a Roman helmet with flowing plume, a pagoda, cornucopas, with cakes or ornamental forms, creams, jellies, ices, Charlotte russe, &c., &c., elegantly gotten up. Then there were pates, game, fowl, oysters, terrapin, and a variety of substantial cheer.

After all had feasted their eyes, the doors of the supper-room were closed, and then the President and Mrs. Lincoln, followed by the Cabinet and the diplomatic corps, entered, to commence the work of demolition, and the substantial testing, or rather, tasting, of the good cheer. Afterwards came the remainder of the guests:

"In the parlor, in the parlor,
Through the parlor onward,
Into the banquet-hall
Crushed seven hundred.
Good cheer to right of them,
Good cheer to left of them
Good cheer in front of them,
How the 'Verdants' wondered,
Stupid men trod on toes,
Tore nice young ladies' clothes,
Into the banquet hall
As if very hungry all
Crushed seven hundred.
'Give me vanilla ice!'
'Here I have called you twice.'
'Now champagne, and in a trice,'
'Waiter you've blundered.'
Flashing of spoons in air,
Eating of salad there—
Hungry men everywhere;
Scrambled and thundered;
Squeezed round by floating skirts:
Joked with by charming flirts:
Eating by rapid spirits:
There, in the banquet hall,
Lacking nothing at all,
Supped seven hundred."

After supper the promenades were resumed, the flirtations were continued, old friends and new acquaintances chatted, and the Yankee Guelphs fraternized cordially with the Border State Ghibelines, until it was time to say that closing word of this most successful and delightful party: "Good night!"

An Idler

Editor's Note: An entire chapter (VIII) of Dr. Kenneth A. Bernard's new book, *Lincoln and the Music of the Civil War*, The Caxton Printers, Ltd., Caldwell, Idaho, 1966, is devoted to the White House reception of February 5, 1862. The chapter is entitled "Will The Leader of The Band Please See Mrs. Lincoln?"

1. Miers, Earl Schenck, Editor-in-Chief, *Lincoln Day By Day—A Chronology 1809-1865*, Vol. III; 1861-1865, page 93, February 5, 1862.
2. Washington *Evening Star*, February 6, 1862.
3. John G. Nicolay married Theresia Bates (1836-1885) June 15, 1865.
4. The Lincoln Library-Museum of the Lincoln National Life Foundation acquired in 1957 and 1958 many remnants of the Nicolay papers.

Did Walt Whitman Write Eulogy Of Lincoln for Speed in 1867?

Editor's Note: Since this issue of *Lincoln Lore* is devoted to newspaper clippings of one sort or another, it is appropriate to include a current article from *The Louisville Times*, dated February 10, 1967, that is of considerable interest. Written by Moyra Schroeder, *Louisville Times* staff writer, the article is reprinted with the permission of the newspaper editor.

"Was Walt Whitman a ghost writer for Kentuckian James Speed?

"Did the famous American poet write a speech that Speed delivered 100 years ago in Louisville on Lincoln's birthday?

"James Speed and his brother, Joshua, were close friends of Abraham Lincoln. James served in Lincoln's Cabinet as Attorney General of the United States.

"James Speed was also a friend of Walt Whitman, who was relatively unknown in the 1860s.

"Just this week, in researching a paper for a study club project, Louisvillian Mrs. Arthur Markham came across a letter, dated Dec. 29, 1866, from James Speed in Louisville to a Washington friend, (Assistant Attorney-General Ashton). Mrs. Markham found the letter quoted in 'Solitary Singer' by Gay Wilson Allen.

"The letter reads:

"I have been appointed to make an address upon the inauguration of a beautiful marble bust of Mr. Lincoln in this city (Louisville)—and am so crowded with business that I have no time to make such preparations as I should.

"Will you see our friend Walt Whitman and ask him whether he will take my rough draft of an address and revise and finish it for me—I have a certain notion that if he has the time and is in the mood, that he can do it better than any man I know. Please let me hear from you or Mr. Whitman soon as to this matter.

"Say to Mr. Whitman that if he can comply with my request, he will greatly oblige me."

"Speed made a speech, a little more than six weeks later, according to a story in an old Frankfort newspaper. "... in the Academy of Music in Louisville, to a select audience, densely crowded, a large proportion being ladies. ... Governor Bramlette presided ... unveiled the bust which elicited the approbation of the audience as a work of art. ... The Governor then introduced ex-Attorney General Speed, who made one of the happiest efforts of his life.

"His eulogy was appropriate, impressive and, at times, sublime ... the band played dirges at intervals. (Lincoln had been assassinated in April, 1865)."

"It is not known whether Speed's 'happiest efforts' were words written by Whitman, but maybe ...

"According to subsequent reports, the marble bust was moved to the custom house building, was rediscovered in 1945, and moved to the J. B. Speed Art Museum, where it is now.

"The sculptor was Col. A. P. Henry, a native of Woodford County. He worked on the bust in a special room at the White House, set aside for the purpose."

The Lincoln Library-Museum has a fine copy of Speed's eulogy which appears as an eight page pamphlet with the following cover and title page: *Oration of James Speed Upon The Inauguration Of The Bust of Abraham Lincoln, At Louisville, Ky., February 12, 1867, Louisville: Bradley & Gilbert, Corner Third and Green Street. 1867.* This rare publication is listed in the *Monaghan Bibliography* as Number 894.

The Foundation staff has carefully read Speed's oration of 1867 (and compared it with an earlier and later pamphlet by the same author) with the hope that snatches of Walt Whitman's literary genius might be revealed. With the exception of a few purple passages, (some of which Speed used again in his 1887 address), nothing resembling Whitman's work is revealed. Reluctantly we have concluded that the former Attorney General wrote his own Lincoln speeches.

For further information concerning the Lincoln bust by Albert P. Henry, consult Robert L. Kincaid's article, "Forgotten Bust of Lincoln," *Lincoln Herald*, Vol. XLV, February 1943, No. 1, pages 16-19, 25.

If Lincoln Had Grown Old

If Booth had missed and Lincoln had finished out his second term and retired in Springfield, to practice a little law and probably make a tour of Europe with Mary, what would he have looked like as an elder statesman?

Students who have made a study of Lincoln photographs ranging from age 37 (1846) to age 56 (1865) have long been baffled by a desire to know how Lincoln looked as a boy, youth and elderly man.

In regard to Lincoln the youth, we must be content with the idealistic pictures drawn by artists, and the busts and statues carved by sculptors. However, in the person of Charles Edwin Bull, a Lincoln impersonator grown old, we can capture something of the appearance and physique of Lincoln if he had lived to the age of 90.

Judge Bull was born in a log cabin at Bull's Spring, Texas, 90 years ago and he spent the first twenty years of his life as Lincoln did. He split logs for fences, helped clear land for the farm, and took bags of grain to the grist mill on the back of a pony. Eventually, he attained the height of six feet four inches and weighed 185 pounds.

When young Bull went to school, he was teased by the other pupils who said that he was "as homely as Abe Lincoln." As the youth grew older, the remarkable resemblance became more and more pronounced. Eventually, Bull played the role of Lincoln in the films "The Iron Horse" and "The Heart of Maryland."

Working his way through the University of Nevada, Bull took up law and became a judge of the Common Pleas Court at Reno for three years. Unlike Lincoln, he was forever afterwards called "Judge." Because of his resemblance to Lincoln, Bull became active in assisting in drives for funds during World War I, and meanwhile



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation
Charles E. Bull at age 74 in 1955.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Charles E. Bull who reached his 90th birthday on February 26, 1971.

he gained a national reputation as a Lincoln impersonator.

At the "Century of Progress" World's Fair in Chicago (1933-34) he appeared in Lincoln attire at the Ann Rutledge Tavern and gave autographs to thousands of visitors. He also performed as Lincoln on the stage and went on tours appearing in hundreds of high schools and colleges throughout the country.

Judge Bull always wore a beard like the Sixteenth President's, and his hair and dress resembled Lincoln's in every detail. He once made the statement, "I am proud of the physical resemblance which nature gave me, but I never 'aped' the man; I have never paraded the hat, coat and shawl unless in character on stage or in parades."

Having enjoyed an interesting and worthwhile career, Judge Bull lives quietly at his home in Los Angeles, California, reminiscing over events in his past and looking like Abraham Lincoln would have looked if he had reached his ninetieth birthday at the turn of the century.

John G. Nicolay – Inventor

It is generally known, at least among Lincoln students, that the Sixteenth President was an inventor. Lincoln's Patent No. 6469 bears the title "Improved method of lifting vessels over shoals." The patent is dated May 22, 1849 (See *Lincoln Lore* No. 1439, January, 1958). However, it is not generally known that Lincoln's private secretary, John G. Nicolay, was also an inventor.

It has been stated that, "Patenting inventions was the principal luxury (Nicolay) allowed himself throughout his life." According to his daughter, Helen Nicolay, *Lincoln's*

Secretary — A Biography of John G. Nicolay, Longman's, Green and Co., 1949, he obtained five patents: "The rotary press in 1852; a shot pouch in 1864; an ingenious window catch in 1870; an exercising machine in 1878; and, in 1891, a folding camp stool . . ." Some of these patents will be discussed in this short article.

Miscellaneous notes to be found in the remnant of Nicolay material, which the Foundation acquired in 1957, indicate that Nicolay spent considerable time on a machine to fold sheets of paper, on a springboard buggy, on an adjustable division for book shelves, and on a reading desk. However, these devices were not patented.

Among Nicolay's earliest papers is a letter from Harper's (probably Harper's Weekly) indicating that he had contrived a machine for folding sheets of paper. The publisher requested that he send his machine for examination as they had nothing of the kind in their printing establishment, and would like such an aid, if efficient, and, "not too expensive." Apparently the paper folder did not go beyond the drawing boards.

The inventor also worked on a rotary printing press for four years, and built a model out of material not well suited for the purpose. It seems that one important part was whittled from a pine board, which should have been metal rather than wood. However, the model worked. It was called "Nicolay's Rotary Cone Printing Press".

In the year 1852 Nicolay left Pittsfield (Pike County), Illinois for Washington, D. C., to visit the Patent Office. His model must have attracted some attention because on August 18th, the *National Intelligencer* mentioned Nicolay (the first time his name appeared under a Washington

Continued Next Page

date line) as a youthful printer who, "in his remote residence, had never seen a machine press." The reporter continued: "We saw him often here, during the time his application was before the Patent Office, and were as much impressed by his modesty and intelligence as with the ingenuity of his invention."

In his Specification of Letters Patent, Nicolay stated, "My invention relates to an improved and simple arrangement of printing press. It consists of the peculiar combination and adaptation of conical impressing cylinders and their respective distributing rollers to the face or bed of a wheel or disk arranged and operating as hereinafter more fully described by reference to the drawing, whereby a press is produced combining simplicity, cheapness, and efficiency of action, whether constructed to be operated by hand or other power."

It is not believed that Nicolay stayed in Washington until the patent was issued because his Patent Number 9805 bears the date of October 5, 1852. For about six months the inventor devoted his full time to furthering his invention, but eventually he was back at the *Free Press* office as owner and editor.

Nicolay's "Improvement in Sash-Fasteners" was a device "to prevent (a) window from being raised from the outside." The Patent No. 108 171 is dated October 11, 1870. This time Nicolay gave his residence as Springfield (Sangamon County), Illinois.

His Folding Chair bears the Patent No. 445 190 and is dated January 27, 1891. The Foundation has Nicolay's original patent model. Helen Nicolay made the following statement regarding the patent: "A folding camp stool with a comfortable back, for which his daughter, using it on sketching expeditions, blessed him many times." The Letters Patent give Nicolay's address as Washington, District of Columbia.

Like Lincoln's invention, not one of Nicolay's patents ever proved financially profitable.

Ver-ry Inter-esting (If True?)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Little known references to the Lincoln family in Kentucky have always appealed to the editor, as he is a native of the Blue Grass State, and recently while checking an item in Emanuel Hertz's, *The Hidden Lincoln*, The Viking Press, 1938, William H. Herndon's letter to Jesse Weik, January 9, 1886, came under close scrutiny. Herndon related to Weik a very questionable story that he claimed occurred in 1817 (the Lincoln family moved to Indiana in December, 1816) which he attributed to Mentor Graham. The statement follows:

The name of the man is Mentor Graham; he was an intelligent man, a good and a truthful man, and yet in some things he was "sorter cranky." About the year 1817 he was traveling from to Elizabethtown, Kentucky. In passing from to the latter place he saw at a little place a crowd of men, stopped, hitched his horse, and went among the crowd, soon found out that a man had killed his wife. Persons were expressing



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

The original folding camp chair patented by John G. Nicolay, January 27, 1891.

their horror of the act. Soon after Graham had stopped Thomas Lincoln and his boy Abraham came along and stopped, went among the crowd, found out what was the matter, had some conversation with the crowd, and now comes the nib of this letter. After all the people had expressed their ideas, one of the men said to Abraham: "My little boy, what do you think of such a deed?" The boy studied a moment, and gave a terse and eloquent idea of the cruel deed. Graham says that the boy was very sad, that his language was eloquent and feeling for one so young. The remarks which he made astonished all present, were pronounced good, plain, terse, and strong, and says Graham: I have now known Mr. Lincoln for more than fifty years and I can see the same trait of character and the same style now in Lincoln that I did in 1817 in Kentucky . . .

The Ten Maxims — Not Lincoln's Words

Every year the Republican National Committee in Washington, D. C., furnishes speech material for those politicians who are called upon to make Lincoln Day addresses. Such compilations for 1967, 1968, 1969 and 1970 have been acquired by the Foundation.

While a great many of the topics for discussion deal with current issues, as seen from the Republican Party's point of view, some are concerned with Abraham Lincoln with such topics as "Lincoln's Life in Brief," "Lincoln's Farewell Address at Springfield," "Lincoln's Second In-

augural Address," "Lincoln Quotes," "Lincoln's Plan of Campaign in 1840," "Lincoln The Republican," and "Lincoln Anecdotes."

The compiler of this Lincoln-Republican information warned the Lincoln Day orators that, "that there is a popular misapprehension that the . . . ten maxims were authored by Lincoln" (See illustration "Ten points by Wm. J. H. Boetcker). The Lincoln Day orators were cautioned not to use the maxims as Lincoln's words even though in 1950 they were inserted in the *Congressional Record*, and were printed in *Look Magazine*, under the mistaken impression that they were Lincoln quotes. In fact, in 1954, the ten maxims were widely read and circulated in a Lincoln-Day speech of a Cabinet Member.

The case of mistaken identity possibly arose from a 3 x 5 inch leaflet that the Committee for Constitutional Government distributed prior to 1950. One side was labeled "Lincoln on Limitation," followed by bona-fide words of Lincoln, enclosed in quotation marks. The other side of the leaflet was headed "Ten Points — They cost so little . . . They are worth so much!" These ten points were not enclosed in quotation marks. However, in later printings in the absence of a stated source and with the deletion of Boetcker's name, the understandable impression was that they, too, were Lincoln quotes.

The ten points actually originated with the Rev. William J. H. Boetcker, a retired minister of Erie, Pa., who authored, copyrighted and first printed them in 1916. Later the Committee for Constitutional Government apparently adopted them for a Lincoln leaflet, printed them under Lincoln's "by-line," but with the notation: "Inspiration of Wm. J. H. Boetcker." Later this reference to Mr. Boetcker was dropped from the leaflet, and the later undated C.C.G. flier possessed by the Republican National Committee Research Division contained no reference to Mr. Boetcker's inspiration, or that of anyone else; thus leaving the impression that the ten points were suggested by Lincoln.

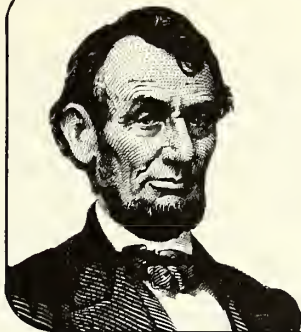
Ten Points

They cost so little
They are worth so much!

1. You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.
2. You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.
3. You cannot help small men by tearing down big men.
4. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich.
5. You cannot lift the wage-earner by pulling down the wage-payer.
6. You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than your income.
7. You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred.
8. You cannot establish sound security on borrowed money.
9. You cannot build character and courage by taking away a man's initiative and independence.
10. You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

Inspiration of Wm. J. H. Boetcker

If you wish to distribute this leaflet to friends, members of your church, lodge or union, fellow workers in your firm, we will supply 25 free, post paid anywhere, upon request. Buy in quantities for enclosure in your mail, \$1 for 400; \$2 per 1,000 post paid anywhere. Ask for "Lincoln on Limitation," Committee for Constitutional Government, 201 E. 42nd St., N.Y.C.



Lincoln Lore

September, 1980

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
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Number 1711

BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE Lincoln in Graphic Art, 1860-1865 The Sentimental Counterattack

Politics provided subject matter for the satirical artists of Lincoln's day, but satire was never the dominant motif in popular prints. Sentimentalism dominated American taste—even highbrow taste. Pro-Lincoln cartoons and simple portraits to be hung on parlor walls answered the satirists while Lincoln was President. After he was assassinated, there was no need to answer the critics. They were completely silenced, and an enormous sentimental counterattack swept them from the field—virtually forever.

The last issue of *Lincoln Lore* focused mostly on the satirical vein in graphic art in Lincoln's day. This issue dwells on the sentimental strain which prevailed in popular depictions of Lincoln after April 15, 1865. The prints shown are all part of an exhibit entitled, "BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE: Lincoln in Graphic Art, 1860-1865." It will be on view in the Cannon House Office Building in Washington, D.C., through March, 1981.

The only really respectable art, popular or otherwise, in the Victorian era was sentimental in content. Satire had at best a marginal respectability. Even humorists as great as Mark Twain ran afoul of the genteel tradition as late as the end of the nineteenth century. In Lincoln's day joke books were sold more at train stations than by respectable booksellers. As the previous issue of *Lincoln Lore* showed, Lincoln's own reputation for wit was something of a liability.

The graphic arts do not lend themselves to subtle interpretations of events. Subtlety is the realm of the word. In the pictorial and popular view of things, John Wilkes Booth was the tool of the devil, and angels carried Lincoln to heaven. There he was greeted by George Washington. When printmakers needed non-controversial images, they could always turn to religion and to the Father of His Country. The immediate association of Lincoln with Washington was remarkable.

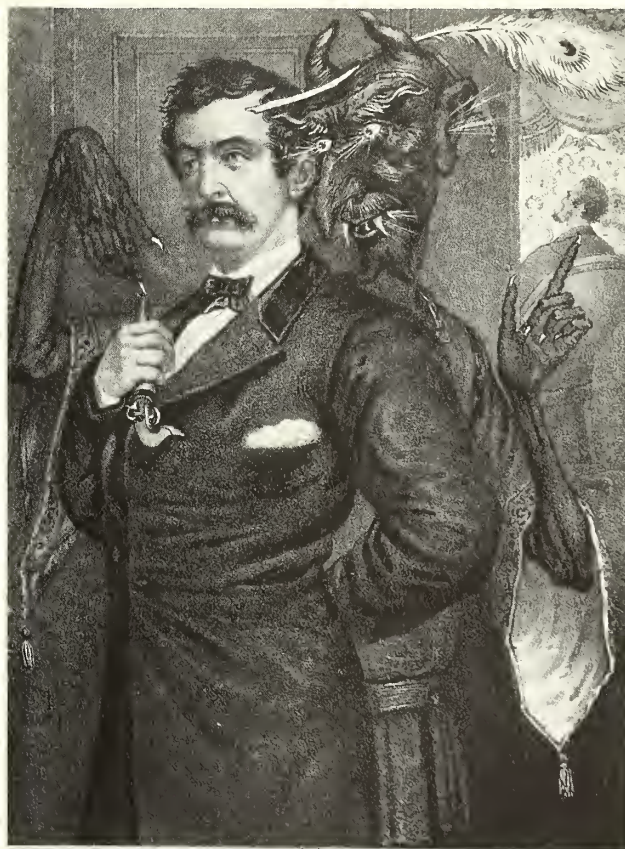
Lincoln's association with him was possible because the Civil War had saved the Union Washington had founded. It was the sort of association that a printmaker wanted to make only when it was a safe bet. Although there are many prints of Washington and Lincoln together, none bears a date before 1865. Statesmanship on a par with George Washington's was truly within the ability only of dead politicians.

Another part of the sentimental counterattack which had lasting effects was the development of what might be called the "Cult of the First Family." Lincoln never realized the power of this, and the printmakers were surprisingly slow to do so. When they caught on, however, they launched a phenomenon now visible at every

newsstand and grocery store check-out counter in America, as glossy magazines vie with each other to blazon forth color pictures and pulp stories about the President's wife, children, brothers, sisters, mother, and father.

The printmakers' slowness to provide the sentimental public they served with a suitable portrait of the First Family (the term was not used in Lincoln's day) was in part due to the old problem of models to copy. President Lincoln never posed with his whole family for a photograph. His wife was rarely photographed and was never photographed with her husband. Only in February, 1864 did Lincoln and his son Thomas sit for a charming portrait which provided a model for numerous scenes of domestic bliss.

Lincoln's failure to provide good models to copy was only a part of the problem. The printmakers were apparently unaware of the potential market for family scenes. Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln raised Abraham from age nine to maturity and outlived her stepson, but it never occurred to anyone to go out to Coles County, Illinois, and photograph her until after her stepson was killed. Knowledge of Lincoln's family was hard to



Interred, according to act of Congress, A. D. 1865, by "The Major in the Clerk's Office of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia."

J. L. MAGEE, PUB. 305 WALNUT ST., PHILADELPHIA

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. The simple view of the assassination.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Lincoln was carried to heaven . . .

come by. Even when a printmaker copied the photograph of Lincoln and his son Thomas, the print was entitled, "Lincoln and His Son Thaddeus"! Tad was the boy's nickname, bestowed on him by his father, who thought he looked like a tadpole (with a large head and small body) when he was a baby.



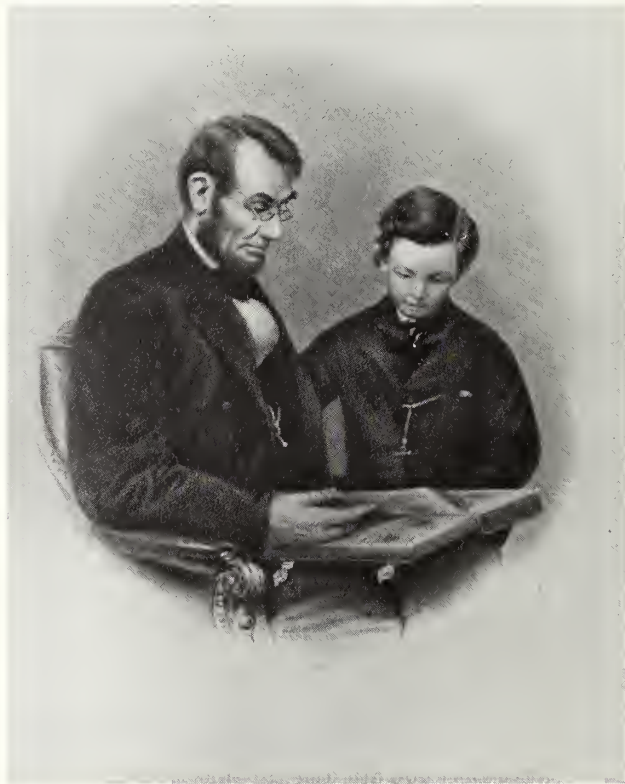
From the Louis A. Warren
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FIGURE 3. . . to meet George Washington.

After the assassination the printmakers caught on quickly. They invented the family portraits which Lincoln had never provided in life. Starting with the photograph of Lincoln and Tad, they added other family members from other individual portraits. When they did not know what a family member looked like, they sometimes turned his head away from the viewer and dressed him as a typical little boy from some English Victorian print.

The urge to have America's Presidents domesticated proved to be strong in Victorian America, and an abundance of family prints appeared just after Lincoln's death — many of them crude, some grotesque, and all the products of printmakers' imaginations. The popularity of these pictures could not be ignored — nor could their unstated political message: could this good family man in his Victorian parlor really be a threat to American liberties? President Ulysses S. Grant would calm any anxieties that he might prove to be a dangerous "man on horseback" by appearing in numerous family portraits.

The unskilled crudity of most of the family prints is as much a comment on the demand for domestic art as on the infant stage of America's graphic arts industry. These prints were long on love and short on technical skill, but they are eloquent



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. Lincoln and "Thaddeus."

testimony to the reverence Americans held for Lincoln — eventually. They were also responsible for discovering a nearly unquenchable market for pictures of the President's family, a market that has not been saturated to this day.

The printmakers' association of Lincoln with George Washington was also prophetic. Before the twentieth century, educated opinion ranked Washington first and Lincoln second among American Presidents. Even John G. Nicolay, Lincoln's private secretary and biographer, typified this thinking in 1904, when he wrote, "If we accord the first rank to Washington as founder, so we must unhesitatingly give to Lincoln the second place as preserver and regenerator of American liberty." In polls of historians taken in 1948, 1962, and 1968, however, Lincoln ranked first and Washington second in all three.

Poll of 55 Experts by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., 1948

1. Abraham Lincoln
2. George Washington



*From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum*

FIGURE 5. Sometimes Tad became Willie.

3. Franklin D. Roosevelt
4. Woodrow Wilson
5. Thomas Jefferson
6. Andrew Jackson
7. Theodore Roosevelt
8. Grover Cleveland
9. John Adams
10. James K. Polk

Poll of 75 Experts by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., 1962.

1. Abraham Lincoln
2. George Washington
3. Franklin D. Roosevelt
4. Woodrow Wilson
5. Thomas Jefferson



*From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum*

FIGURE 6. Willie's portrait is on the wall.



*From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum*

FIGURE 7. Mary's legs appear to be very short.

6. Andrew Jackson
7. Theodore Roosevelt
8. James K. Polk
9. Harry S. Truman
10. John Adams
11. Grover Cleveland

Poll of 571 Historians by Gary M. Maranell, 1968.

1. Abraham Lincoln
2. George Washington
3. Franklin D. Roosevelt
4. Thomas Jefferson
5. Theodore Roosevelt
6. Woodrow Wilson



*From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum*

FIGURE 8. Note portraits of George and Martha Washington.



LINCOLN AND HIS FAMILY.

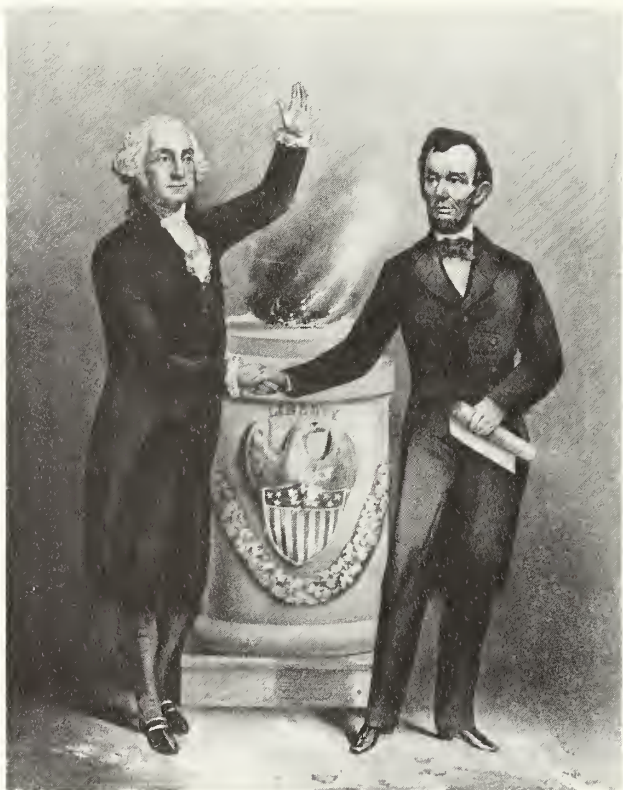
From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum.

FIGURE 9. A grotesque Lincoln family.

7. Harry S. Truman
8. Andrew Jackson
9. John Kennedy
10. John Adams

From "The Evaluation of Presidents: An Extension of the Schlesinger Polls," *Journal of American History*, LVII (June, 1970), 104-113.

There were no public opinion polls in Lincoln's day, but the popular prints provide a sort of barometer of public opinion. Their direct legacy to us, Lincoln's incomparably high reputation and the Cult of the First Family, even anticipated public opinion. Their indirect legacy is a rich and vivid documentation of the social and political currents of Abraham Lincoln's era.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 10. Lincoln was taller than Washington.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Illinois State Historical Society is seeking proposals for papers, or sessions, to be delivered at the Second Annual Symposium on Illinois History, December 4-5, 1981. Papers, or sessions, will be considered on any aspect of the history, literature, art and culture, politics, geography, archeology, anthropology, and related fields of Illinois and/or the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys. The Symposium will be held in Springfield.

Individuals who wish to submit proposals should send a three hundred to six hundred word summary, along with resumes of intended participants, to:

Roger D. Bridges, Director of Research
Illinois State Historical Library
Old State Capitol
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Proposals must be received by April 15, 1981. Individuals will be notified of the Committee's decision by June 1, 1981.

Members of the Symposium Committee are Robert M. McColley, University of Illinois—Urbana/Champaign, Chairman; G. Cullom Davis, Sangamon State University; Raymond E. Hauser, Waubesa Community College; Victor Hicken, Western Illinois University; Wilma J. Lund, Illinois State Board of Education; and Robert E. Sterling, Joliet Junior College.

CALL FOR LINCOLN PAPERS

The Abraham Lincoln Association is seeking papers for its Ninth Annual Abraham Lincoln Symposium, which will be held on February 12, 1982. Proposals for papers dealing with Abraham Lincoln should be submitted no later than June 1, 1981, to Roger D. Bridges, Chairman of the Symposium Committee, Abraham Lincoln Association, Old State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois 62706.

Springfield's annual symposium on Abraham Lincoln is the premier Lincoln event in the country. Each year the leading scholars in the Lincoln field gather in Lincoln's home town to deliver or to listen to the latest findings in scholarship. The symposium is free of charge, and all interested Lincoln students should make an effort to attend. The papers are always worthwhile, and the opportunity to mingle with other like-minded people is not to be missed.

The symposium is followed in the evening by the annual dinner of the Abraham Lincoln Association. This is always a gala event and makes a fine conclusion to the day. To be sure of receiving the announcement of the symposium and the dinner, join the Abraham Lincoln Association. Individual memberships are available for fifteen dollars. Membership includes a subscription to the *Papers of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, a handsome journal published annually. Requests for membership or for additional information should be directed to Mr. William K. Alderfer, Secretary, Abraham Lincoln Association, Old State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois 62706.

A Correction

While dispensing advice to collectors in *Lincoln Lore* Number 1709 (July, 1980), I neglected to mention that they should study the dates and signatures carefully — something I did not do myself in the case of the letter shown on page 3. As James R. H. Spears of Indianapolis quickly pointed out, the letter could not have been written by Lew Wallace. The handwriting is not his, and he died four years before the letter was written.

The letter came in a lot of genuine materials, and I carelessly accepted the owner's identification of the author. I spent all my effort trying to figure out who the recipient of the letter was and what book it referred to. Mr. Spears closed his letter by saying, "I wonder who Charlie and Lew really were?" Do any of *Lincoln Lore's* other knowledgeable readers know?

M.E.N., Jr.

Meriden 2 EAST 54TH ST., NEW YORK

- X 184. NICOLAY, John G. Private Secretary and Biographer of Lincoln. A.L.S. 2 pp., 8vo. Washington, Apr. 1, 1897. INTERESTING LETTER, to one of the editors of the Century Magazine, giving a favorable opinion on a manuscript about Lincoln. "This reminiscence seems to have both plausibility and point. . . . The Meriden speech was doubtless made early in March, 1860, at which time Mr. Lincoln made a little tour of speech-making in New England, and before the Chicago Convention." Etc. 5. 6. 6.

AUTOGRAPH LETTERS HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

PAUL C. RICHARDS — AUTOGRAPHS

FIVE DOLLARS

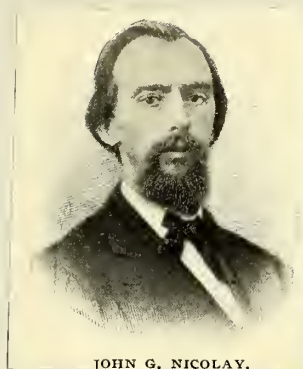
RECOMMENDATION FOR AN OFFICER TO SERVE WITH A NEWLY RECRUITED NEGRO REGIMENT

22. NICOLAY, JOHN G. 1832-1901. Private Secretary to President Lincoln. Autograph Letter Signed, as Private Secretary, on imprinted Executive Mansion stationery. 2 full pages, 4to. Washington, May 18, 1863. To Brig. General L[orenzo] Thomas. Nicolay writes: "Being informed that you will soon be at Nashville or Murfreesboro for the purpose of beginning the organization of negro troops there, I beg leave to specially recommend for an officer of said service, my friend William L. Baldwin....I know him personally to be discreet, trustworthy, untiring in energy, and as brave as men get to be. I have known him for years...and if charged with the care and labor of fitting negroes for soldiers will do it. Having been in the service from the beginning of the war, he has...the necessary military experience. Better than all, he will labor earnestly for the success of the experiment, as he was a pro-slavery Democrat when he entered the army, and has become so thoroughly convinced...of the necessity of arming the negroes that he voluntarily asks to be assigned to this service...." Some tiny paper repairs at folds and margins, else fine. Choice content! 350.00

John George Nicholas, Born at Kissenzen
Bavaria, Feb. 26 - 1832. - In 1838, with his parents
he came to St. Louis, then to a farm, S.E. of Pittsfield,
Pike County, Illinois. Nicholas was not American
citizen until October 12, 1870, before Judge C.L.
Higbertson in Pittsfield, Pike County, Illinois.
See Pike Co. Ill. - Common Law Records Pages 394
395. Nicholas though a power during the
Civil War, serving as American Consul at
Paris, was not even an American Citizen.
But actually a subject of the King of Bavaria.
Nicholas's father was never naturalized.

(13) nor I a long one. I am pleased to know that in
your judgment, the little I did say was not
entirely a failure." At Everett's request
Lincoln wrote with pen and ink a copy
of his Gettysburg Address, which manu-
script was auctioned at a Sanitary Fair
in New York for the benefit of Soldiers-
at the request of George Bancroft, the
historian, he wrote a copy for the Soldiers
and Sailors Fair at Baltimore. He
also wrote still another to be lithographed
as a facsimile in a publication, "Auto-
graphed Leaves of Our Country's Authors"
For Mr. Wells his host to the

John G. Nicolay



JOHN G. NICOLAY.

